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MARMORNE

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MARMORNE

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THE STORY IS TOLD BY

ADOLPHUS SEGRAVE

THE YOUNGEST OF THREE BROTHERS

NEW EDITION

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PREFACE.

THE chief incident on which this story hangs may seem improbable, perhaps even impossible, to some critics; but the writer has been familiar from his infancy with an old house, not in the same region as the imaginary Boisvipère, where a similar incident really occurred, though not in the present generation. It is purposely rendered more probable in this fictitious narrative than it was in the reality, for the brothers who actually existed lived in a peaceful country, without those opportunities for wrong-doing which are afforded by the confusion attendant upon a state of war. The author cannot go more into detail with reference to the actual occurrence, lest he should weaken whatever degree of interest may belong to the following pages.

December 1877.

MARMORNE.

I.

I AM desired by my brother Emil, who is dying, to place on record what I know of certain extraordinary events which have taken place in our family during the last few years. He is anxious that the truth should be fully told, and he trusts me to tell it. I suggested to him that, although he had not strength now to write the narrative with his own hand, I might serve as his amanuensis, and write whatever he dictated; but my brother would not listen to this proposition. "Not only," he said, "will I not dictate any part of the narrative, but I will not even read what you yourself may place on record. It shall be your business to write as men write history. Consider all the actors as dead. Write down all you know, and as impartially as you can. On my part, I will prepare a brief note, which you may append to your own account of these matters." This was Emil's way of settling the business, and I knew him too well to waste time in useless expostulation.

So I begin my task at once, and a painful task it is likely to be. What a wide difference there is between writing about things in which we have a close personal concern, and about matters in which our interest, however warm, is simply artistic! I have done some literary work, and never dreaded the hard labour of composition; but the task before me is of another order, and it alarms me.

II.

We were three brothers. Julius, the eldest, joined an infantry regiment at eighteen. Emil was educated for the bar. I myself, the youngest, was intended for holy orders, which, since we are a Catholic family, meant in my case, that I was to be a priest of the Church of Rome. For reasons which it is unnecessary to explain, I disappointed my mother's wishes in this respect, and did not enter any other profession. I became in this way what is called the idle man of a family, but have employed my leisure in the studies which are most dear to me. It is probable that I could not long have followed any profession actively on account of the extreme uncertainty of my health, which nevertheless, since I have enjoyed the liberty of working at my own hours, has permitted me to accomplish a good deal. Julius, on the other hand, possessed a magnificent physical constitution, sustained by an enviable equality of health; and even my brother Emil, though much less robust, and having little of the appearance of vigour, was one of the most unwearied brain-workers I ever knew.

III.

Seldom or never does a man love his brothers quite equally. I never loved Emil much, though I admired him for his uncommon intellectual powers. He had a pitiless habit of asking incessantly for *results:* he always seemed to expect that studies such as mine should bear immediate fruit; and, if the fruit were not visible day by day, he treated me as an idler. The feeling that I was not sufficiently respected caused me much bitterness at times. Little enough of that bitterness remains with me, and whatever may be the shortcomings of this narrative, it will not fail in perfect justice to my brother Emil.

But I loved my brother Julius, and understood him. How grateful he always was for that understanding! There were times when it consoled him under what must have been very terrible trials to his patience. The hardest time of all for Julius was when he quitted the army, in which he had positively nothing whatever to occupy him, and began to make preparations for that great African expedition which has made his name familiar to every one.

IV.

Our dear mother had died two years before. Our father, Sir Anthony Segrave, lived in great retirement at Segrave Park, which is situated in a beautiful district of the north of England, and occupies a valley of its own, through which flows a stream that the poet Wordsworth loved. The house is modern, and has replaced an

ancient mansion which formerly occupied the same site. Every trace of that historic house was swept away in those evil days when men had utterly turned their backs upon the past, however honourable, and thought only of the ephemeral fashions of the hour.

When Julius left the army, which he did with apparent suddenness, and without consulting any one, he came home to Segrave at once. Sir Anthony, in my presence, received him with chilling coldness. "I am sorry," said my father, "that you have quitted your profession, and I am pained that you should have done it so suddenly, and without consulting any one." Julius answered that his resolution had not been taken without due reflection; and that, though he greatly regretted his apparent failure in duty in not laying the matter previously before Sir Anthony, even this had been calculated with a view to avoid useless discussion. The army in time of peace was unsuitable for him, he added: it deprived him of the disposal of his own hours, and gave no outlet for his energies. It then came out that he cherished great plans of travel, and, in a word, proposed to himself nothing less than an exploration of Central Africa.

When my father was under the influence of any strong emotion, he had a painful impediment in his speech; and I well remember with what difficulty he uttered his protestations against my brother's projects. Julius was evidently touched; but, like most young men who are bent upon projects which they have cherished for a long time in secret, he remained perfectly unshaken in his resolution. "Wait a year or two, my dear boy," Sir

Anthony said kindly, "and then I shall be gone, and you can do exactly as you like." To this my brother answered that he had no present intention of leaving England, or even of quitting Segrave; that it would be the height of folly to set off without the most ample preparation, and that at present he was unprepared in every way. Here the matter dropped, and the irritation with which my father had received the first news of my brother's resolution to leave the army gave place to a settled gravity and sadness, which, I thought, affected Julius more than he acknowledged to himself.

V.

My brother remained at Segrave, as he had promised, and gave his whole time to a systematic self-education for the wild life that lay before him. He began by learning something of all the common trades, and in the course of a few months became expert enough to do rough work of various kinds sufficiently well for his purposes. There is a strong tendency in highly civilised people to consider any one insane who does not live in every respect as they do; and a young man who deliberately sets himself to become that despised personage a "Jack of all trades," acts in a manner so directly opposed to the spirit of modern civilisation and the principles of political economy that he is sure to be set down as a madman. This is what happened to poor Julius. Our friends and neighbours would not take his purposes into consideration, but with that unimaginative

and perhaps partially wilful short-sightedness which is so common to those who judge the conduct of others, fixed their eyes on Julius as a young gentleman in the heart of civilised England, and decided that he had gone mad. Certainly, if Julius had intended to remain all his life at Segrave Park, the education which he was now giving himself would have been superfluous, as we had workmen within a moderate distance who were sure to remain unapproachable in their several specialties by an amateur. Our friends saw Julius where he was corporeally, in Segrave Park; but mentally he was already beginning to live in the African deserts. He certainly did things which to the commonplace home mind must have seemed exceedingly "odd." He had masters as regularly as a young lady who is finishing a superfine education: only, instead of being music-masters, and linguists, and fashionable painters in water-colours, they were tinners, and tailors, and the village carpenter. The tinner taught him to solder, the tailor taught him to stitch, and the carpenter taught him to make rude huts and still ruder furniture. Worse than this, he went and killed sheep and cattle at the butcher's, and cut them up—and he did this till he became quite expert. He wore shoes that he had made himself, out of skin that he had tanned, and the skin came from a beast that he had slaughtered; and wonderful shoes they were! He would eat nothing that was prepared in the usual way: he cut raw beef into strips and dried it in the sun, and when it was dry he pounded it in a mortar, and put it in a bag of raw hide, and mixed it up with grease. This it

seems, is pemmican; and it is said to be eatable when there are not too many hairs in it.

VI.

The next thing my brother did was to build himself a fort in the park, with the assistance of two servants who were devoted to him. They began by collecting stones from the banks of the stream, and erected four walls which made an enclosure very like a pound. At two of the corners were square huts, or rather little stone houses, of the same height as the walls, which projected like the towers at the corners of a feudal castle, and these huts had no windows except four narrow loop-holes, from two of which a gun could sweep the space in the front of two walls, whilst two others commanded the open country. In this way, as Julius demonstrated, the fortress could be vigorously defended by a very few men. He slept every night in one of the corner houses himself, and his two men slept in the other,—all with loaded guns. Inside the enclosure were some old waggons, and every night the men drove some cattle and horses into it as if for protection. From time to time, Julius would sound an alarm in the dead of night to accustom himself and his men to vigilance, and then they fired volleys of blank cartridges, which, with the modern repeating rifles, produced very much the effect of a skirmish of infantry. He never would allow any visitors to penetrate into the interior of his fortress, which rather irritated the curiosity of some ladies of our ac-

quaintance, who thought they ought to be admitted everywhere, and declared that he was rude already, and would soon be perfectly uncivilised. The doings of Julius in Segrave Park soon became notorious over half the county. The talk about him went on faster than ever, in consequence of the following little incident.

Julius got two very fine sporting rifles made specially for him in London, and intended for large game. We had no deer in Segrave Park; and, indeed, if we had possessed any, they would scarcely have been big enough to try weapons upon which were intended for the lion and the hippopotamus. The only big things we had, except horses, were my father's cows and oxen, and it is the simple truth that Julius shot half-a-dozen of them in one morning. The story of this exploit ran like wild-fire; but the narrators either did not know or wilfully omitted the fact that the animals had already been sold to the butcher, with whom Julius had made an amicable arrangement beforehand. My brother and his own men cut up the cows just as if they had been in Africa; but the butcher superintended the operation, and carried the meat away in his cart, except what Julius chose to reserve for the consumption of his fort.

In the summer weather he made aquatic experiments on a large pond we had in the park with the rudest possible boats, constructed by himself and his men. In this way he became possessed of a skin coracle, probably not so highly finished as those of the ancient Britons, a raft, and a canoe which looked like a relic of prehistoric man. His men and he purposely upset themselves from

time to time in the middle of the pond, and swam ashore. In the hot weather their life was quite amphibious. They swam every day in their clothes; and, what seemed still more absurd to the local mind, they made our horses swim across the pond, and followed by holding on to their tails.

VII.

Good society, by this time, had made Julius Segrave its principal topic of conversation. The mortal dulness of provincial life was delightfully enlivened by such an unprecedented opportunity for satirical narrative and imaginative commentary. It was scarcely possible to exaggerate the energetic originality of my brother's manner of life: the simple truth was enough to be infinitely ludicrous when people resolutely refused to understand his purposes. The talkers either ignored the proposed African expedition altogether, or else amused each other by smiling knowingly when it was mentioned, with an expression of well-bred scepticism. The received theory was, that Julius was in that stage of insanity which people considered diverting. Polite society was amused with him, as villagers are with the local idiot. Speculation was rife as to the length of time it would be safe to keep him out of a lunatic asylum—a terminus to my brother's career which ladies and gentlemen seemed to consider quite a suitable topic for their pleasantries. Finally, an account of his "eccentricities" appeared in a country newspaper of opposite political opinions to our own.

Julius was made aware of all these comments through the too officious zeal of one of his own servants, who considered it his duty to inform his master of everything that could possibly be disagreeable to him; but my brother had an unfeigned contempt for public opinion, and steadily pursued the programme he had traced out for himself. I suspect, however, that the busy tongues round about Segrave Park did somewhat embitter his existence there, and loosen his attachment to the place; so that he was more inclined to advance the period of his departure than he would have been if everybody had understood him and taken him *au sérieux*.

VIII.

Leaving Julius to his own way of life, let me tell the reader so much of the history of our family as it is necessary for him to know. My father's mother had been a Frenchwoman, heiress of an old family in Burgundy; and from her Sir Anthony had inherited an estate there, with an old chateau, which he very rarely visited. My grandmother had some painful associations connected with the place, the nature of which we never precisely knew; but from the time of her marriage, although she revisited her native country several times, and even stayed at various country-houses in the province where she was born, she never again crossed the threshold of the chateau of Boisvipère. The very name of the place had something alarming, for there could be no doubt of its etymology; and the woods about the

house, which were very dense and extensive, still abounded in the venomous creatures from which they derived their appellation. The English reader, when he hears of Burgundy, imagines a sunny land of vineyards almost destitute of trees, but abounding in everything that makes glad the heart of man; there are places, however, in the Burgundian highlands, as lonely and *tristes* as any in the desolate regions of the North. Such a place was Boisvipère; but, as I shall have to describe it fully in the future pages of this narrative, I say no more about it here.

IX.

Once every twenty years, there was a great event on my father's French estate,—the cutting of the woods. Most large forest proprietors divide their property into sections, and cut one section annually, so as to go the round of the whole in the time necessary to the growth of a generation of trees. As we lived at such a distance from Boisvipère, it had been decided, however, to cut the wood there all at once; and this had already been done in the lifetime of my grandmother. A French gentleman who lived in the same dreary region, Monsieur de Marmorne, between whom and ourselves there existed some very distant relationship, had for many years kindly looked after our interests in the country, as his father had done before him. The only recompense which these good and seldom-visited friends had ever received for these services had been the increase of local influence which naturally followed from the power they

exercised over our tenantry. They acted very faithfully by us; and, without their kindness, we should have been obliged to visit Boisvipère much more frequently.

I had never been there, neither had my brother Julius. Emil had been there several times, both with my father and alone. Emil always took a remarkably keen interest in everything concerning the management of estates: he was born with that talent, as Julius was born with the natural faculties of a traveller. It has always seemed to me that Emil ought to have been the eldest son; but Nature does not consider, when she bestows her gifts, the position to be occupied by the recipient. Emil knew all about the French property, and the English property too, which was certainly more than Sir Anthony himself did. In this way the government of the financial matters of the family was gradually passing into Emil's hands, as my father became older and weaker, and my brother Julius more and more absorbed in his great enterprise.

X.

One day in August, when Julius was occupied by some of his experiments in rough life, there came a letter from Monsieur de Marmorne to my father, about which, in the absence of Emil (who was attending to his business as a barrister), Sir Anthony consulted me. Our French friend had a very important suggestion to make. The price of fuel at Paris was now so high that all proprietors who could send their wood there by the cheap water conveyance were doing so. Boisvipère was situ-

ated within a few miles of one of the affluents of the Yonne, which (as the reader is probably already aware) itself falls into the Seine at Montereau. Once on the navigable Yonne, the wood can be made into large rafts, and floated down to Paris at an expense so trifling that it becomes worth while to send it to the capital. But the difficulty at Boisvipère was to get the wood as far as the affluent which would carry the logs down to the Yonne. M. de Marmorne pointed out a way by which this difficulty might be overcome. A little trout-stream flowed through the woods of Boisvipère, and its waters afterwards merged in the very affluent which it was so desirable to reach. He suggested that this trout-stream should be cleared of obstacles, and that a dam should be constructed near its source, where a narrow valley might easily be converted into a lake. From this lake, the stream of Boisvipère might be flooded at will, and logs previously strewn along its bed would thus be carried to the Yonne. In a word, M. de Marmorne proposed to do to our property what had already been done on a much more extensive scale at some distance from it, and with perfect success.

XI.

The project, it was easily proved, would pay a very high interest, indirectly, by the increased value given to the woods at Boisvipère; and few men have the opportunity of investing capital with the certainty of such high returns, combined with such an entire absence of

risk. Our friend, however, added that he shrank from the responsibility of superintending works of that magnitude, if decided upon; but that it was necessary, if the thing were to be done, that it should be undertaken at once, so as to be ready for the next cutting, which would take place in less than three years. My father became greatly interested in this project; but his health was steadily declining, and he dreaded the fatigues of the journey. I suggested that, as Emil was much too busy to leave England (for at that time he was immersed in the details of a very important lawsuit), my brother Julius would perhaps undertake the mission; but my father saw clearly that Julius was too much absorbed in his great African projects to have a mind free enough for business, and so it happened that, young as I was (for I had barely attained my majority), the mission was confided to me.

XII.

My trunk was soon packed, and I quitted Segrave Park the next day. In passing through London I saw Emil for half an hour. He gave me some information about Boisvipère, and commented a little upon our friend Monsieur de Marmorne. "You'll stay at his house, of course," said Emil; and his eyes, usually so intensely practical in their aspect, took an expression of absorbed reverie which I had never before seen them assume. Some internal struggle apparently succeeded to this; for his brow knitted, and his hands played nervously with the envelope of a letter which they unconsciously tore

in pieces. Finally, he gave a sigh (if such an energetic expulsion of air from the chest can be called by that name) which expressed not so much relief from some thought which oppressed him, as the arrival at a decision which it was useless to endeavour to avoid. He had looked up during his minute of abstraction, through the dreary, smoke-begrimed window of his chamber (who but a lawyer could study in such a place?) at the dirty red tiles of the houses behind it, and for a moment his face wore a look of doubt. I interpreted his thoughts thus; "Shall I do or say something?" and that the decision arrived at was in the negative. "What a bore it is, Adolphus," he said to me, "that I should be so bound down by other people's affairs that I have not time to look properly after our own! I wish I could go to Boisvipère. I meant to go with you, you know, to put you in the way; but it is perfectly impossible. Look there!" And he stretched out both his thin hands over a mass of papers that lay on his table. Young as he was, Emil was rapidly rising as a barrister, and work was flowing in upon him.

"What a fool Julius is making of himself!" he went on. "What on earth does he mean with that mad African expedition? I wish he would remember that he is in England still, and act like a rational being. A Yorkshire paper was sent to me the other day with an account of his doings. Why did he leave the army? Nothing upsets a man's reputation for stability like suddenly and prematurely abandoning the profession he has chosen. I'm glad he's not going to Boisvipère with you; he

would have given M. de Marmorne a too perfect example of the eccentric Englishman." On this Emil looked at me critically, and I perceived that he was establishing mental comparisons between myself and Julius. The result seemed to be satisfactory, but in what sense I could not then discover. The light of subsequent events inclines me to believe that my obvious inferiorities to Julius were for an especial reason at that time a recommendation for me.

Emil's manner with me had always conveyed the subtle flattery of an implied intellectual equality, and this from a man of his uncommon powers could not but be agreeable. Julius, on the other hand, treated me always as an inferior, but an inferior very dear to him; and I accepted this position also, from early habit perhaps, without question. I have already said that I never loved Emil very much, but I enjoyed his society considerably. I never in my life knew any one who possessed in a higher degree the enviable gift of equal mental clearness. Most minds are hazy: my own is, and always has been. I reach clearness, but I reach it only by an effort of the will, and only when I have special need of it. The general state of my mind is that of rather dull and dim October weather, when nothing is distinctly seen unless you go close up to it. But Emil lived, as it were, in a lunar landscape, where there is no atmosphere at all, and where every detail is equally and unchangeably distinct. This, of course, is as much as to say that he had not the faintest tincture of the poetic temperament. My brother Julius, on the other hand, was a poet, though

his poetry ran into action rather than verse-making, perhaps because his immense physical powers needed exercise and an outlet.

This clearness in Emil's mind made him a very agreeable person to consult, which no doubt was one of the strongest reasons for his early professional success. On any subject requiring a purely intellectual decision, his insight was most sure; but if affections and sympathies (I do not mean only for persons, but also for things, places, and occupations) had to be taken into account, Emil's advice was of no value; for he either could not or would not allow the sentiments their place. Thus, in the case of my brother Julius, he could not in the least understand that noble spirit of adventure which made him prefer the risks of the wildest travel to the ease of an English garrison. In Emil's view this was simply eccentricity. Nor did he understand the reasons for the life I myself had chosen. My unwillingness to enter a profession seemed to Emil to be due simply to a moment of weakness at the decisive time. No doubt a rising lawyer has a firmer support in the general recognition than a traveller whose discoveries are yet to be made, or a student who has no results to show.

XIII.

It was my first visit to the Continent, but the common difficulty of language did not exist for me. Since my grandmother's time, it had been a tradition in our family to speak French, and our accent had not greatly deteri-

orated. French was Sir Anthony's mother-tongue, and our habit of speaking it with him gave us a fluency and correctness rare amongst Englishmen. The reader will understand, therefore, that, on my first journey to Boisvipère, I could enter into the society of our neighbours there as Englishmen usually can enter into French society only after several years of experience. The novitiate of awkwardness, the trying and almost ludicrous position of a person who is practically half deaf and half dumb, had been therefore spared to me, and, for the same reason, spared likewise to my brothers.

XIV.

I reached the neighbourhood of Marmorne three days afterwards; but, instead of going at once to the house of M. de Marmorne, stayed at a viliage or hamlet called Les Chaumes, where there was a wretched little inn. I wished to have the pleasure of exploring Boisvipère alone. It was not visible from Les Chaumes; but on the morning of my arrival I obtained directions accurate enough to guide me to the chateau. Les Chaumes was situated in a narrow valley or glen with rocky eminences, and what seemed to be the crests of rocky hills on both sides of it. In reality, these were merely the undulating edges of a table-land, as I soon discovered when the path I had to follow led to the top of them. The table-land was of immense extent. Both it and the valley of Les Chaumes, and all the hills visible from it, were entirely covered with dense forest.

No, not entirely. In the midst of the plateau there was a great space of barren land open to the sun, which had burnt all the life out of the coarse grass. Here the rough wood-path totally lost itself, and I stumbled on the stony plain. But I needed the path no longer. In the centre of that dreary expanse stood the chateau of Boisvipère.

The open space in the forest was as nearly as possible circular. The mansion stood in the centre of the circle exactly. A single glance showed me that it was quite impossible that there should be any view from the windows of Boisvipère, — any view, I mean, beyond the monotonous belt of trees. The vagaries of human choice never selected a site so inexpressibly melancholy and oppressive. One glimpse of a distant horizon, one gleam of blue far away, would have relieved the mind in an instant, and made the place endurable; but, though it is fifteen hundred feet above the sea-level, the view is shut in like the view in a London square. And then the mere knowledge of the immensity of the forest was an incubus. I had walked through five miles of wood to get here. On the other side of the mansion a man could not get out of the forest by walking twice that distance. Had I been a novelist seeking effects, I might have first described Boisvipère in chilly mid-winter, with an open expanse of snow belted by a leafless blackness, and the wolves crossing the opening from cover to cover. But Boisvipère needs no such artifice to enhance its unutterable dreariness. It is dreary in the richness of summer; dreary in the freshness of the spring; dreary under the bluest sky, under the brightest sunshine!

XV.

The house itself was not so picturesque as I had hoped to find it; and it certainly did not make up for its want of picturesqueness by any approach to splendour. Four pavilions at the angles of the edifice, united by curtains of masonry, explained the arrangements at once. I knew that I should find a courtyard; and I presumed that the curtains which united the pavilions would contain no more than the thickness of a single room and a corridor.

It was not what is called a ruin. The roofs were still intact. Those of the pavilions rose rather majestically to a certain height, and some remnants of gilding were still visible. The only ornament on the walls consisted of a sculptured coat-of-arms over the entrance. The architecture had an ungainly massiveness; the windows of each storey were all alike, encased in heavy stone.

Before the house was a broad terrace, with an overgrown arbour of yoke-elm at each end. The garden, laid out with rigid formality, had long since been abandoned to itself; but the beds were still marked by their stone borders. The former inhabitants had the advantage, when they had contemplated the wood from the terrace, of contemplating it again from two other sides of the mansion. Merely to imagine such an existence depressed me painfully. I am, however, strangely and peculiarly dependent upon *places* for the condition of my spirits. Boisvipère depressed me from the first, and to

this day it produces in me an almost intolerable sinking of the heart.

XVI.

Behind the mansion were two straight lines of outbuildings, making a sort of street, and here the keeper lodged. I did not choose, at first, to present myself as the representative of the absent owner, but simply asked to be shown through the chateau. The man took a heavy bunch of keys out of a cupboard of highly-polished walnut-wood, and accompanied me.

What struck my English eyes, accustomed to the high polish of a modern English house like Segrave, was the extraordinary *roughness* of Boisvipère. The stairs consisted of great slabs of stone, such as you would expect to find inside some Egyptian pyramid; and the corridors had walls of bare plaster, whilst their floors were paved with brick. All the wood-work in the house, though of solid oak, was painted a cold grey. The wainscot in the *salon* was evidently a joiner's masterpiece; the panels had strange and difficult curves, more curious than elegant, and there were bits of carving about the mirrors. The mirrors themselves had lost their polish in many places. A few portraits hung in different rooms—portraits of our own French ancestors. For sixty years they had gazed on an emptiness like the void of death, on tables where repasts were served no more, on seats in which no one rested.

For the house was furnished still. The quaint old things still remained in the deserted rooms. Quaint

indeed they were, all of them, but neither rich nor beautiful. The chairs were all painted white, and most of them had cane bottoms. A few of the more luxurious had seats and backs of pale and faded tapestry. The mansion had one very uncommon and great merit, namely, its perfect unity, due to its desertion at the time of my grandmother's marriage. The Revolution, too, had forgotten Boisvipère, and left it tranquil in its woods.

XVII.

The house had never been let. Dismal as was its extraordinary situation, it might have been taken as a hunting-seat, for the forest abounded in wild boars and deer and wolves; but, in return for the kindness of the family of De Marmorne, we had always abandoned the whole of the game to them. The keeper told me that, on the occasion of a boar-hunt, they had now and then taken *déjeuner* in the old mansion; but, except at these rare times, its walls echoed no human voices.

My first curiosity about Boisvipère being satisfied by this time, I returned to Les Chaumes, where my luggage was, and hiring the best vehicle in the place, which was a spring-cart, drove directly to Marmorne. I had purposely left the precise day of my arrival uncertain, having pleaded in excuse for this uncertainty the possibility of my being detained in Paris.

The name of Marmorne, or La Mare Morne as it was formerly spelt, conveys such an idea of sadness that I expected to find it as melancholy a habitation as Boisvi-

père itself. But the chateau of La Mare Morne (castle of the Dreary Marsh) had changed its character with the advance of agriculture. The dreary marsh had disappeared, and in place of it were fertile farms and an agreeable pleasure-ground with two or three rather extensive fish-ponds. The house itself presented little of the middle-age character except its towers, but these were older and grander than the pavilions of Boisvipère. Unlike Boisvipère, Marmorne was by no means intelligible at the first glance: it was a picturesque jumble of buildings of various styles, and he who saw it for the first time would have been much embarrassed to guess the arrangement of the interior. The situation, notwithstanding the dreary name, was incomparably more cheerful than that of our own chateau. A narrow valley, which it was easy to see must be exquisitely beautiful, lay immediately behind the house; whilst, before it, the country spread wide, and allowed the eye to range over what seemed illimitable distances. As I saw the place for the first time, it was bathed in the glow and glory of the afternoon sunshine. The sun was declining towards the distant regions beyond the Loire, and the great river was visible in a thin line of brightness, which the eye lost and recovered again in the vastness of the hazy plains.

XVIII.

M. de Marmorne received me with the most cordial kindness. It is a matter of course that he was utterly different from what I had expected him to be, but it is

not a matter of course that he should have been so original as I found him. My first impressions were of two immense brown hands that seized both mine and held them, whilst his keen eyes looked down upon me benevolently from under the shaggiest pair of eyebrows in the world. I say "looked down," for he was of giant stature, a gaunt ungainly figure, awkward and rapid in his movements, and taking great strides across the marble pavement of his hall. Since then, I have learned what the great strides mean, and where they have become habitual. My host was one of those fortunate beings whose pursuits maintain equally the two activities of mind and body. He made agriculture his business, and the study of natural history his recreation. He knew the country in every direction as only a naturalist or a landscape-painter knows the neighbourhood he lives in. On his longer excursions, his custom was to drive in his carriage as far as the horses would take him in a day, then leave them to rest at some inn or farm, and set off alone and on foot, with his box for botanical specimens, his hammer for geology, a pocket-compass, and an ordnance map. In this way he had explored everything within a radius of a hundred miles, and formed at Marmorne a large museum illustrative of the district. My host added to his scientific tastes a profound knowledge of local archæology, with all that such knowledge presupposes in a district so rich in historical reminiscences.

M. de Marmorne wore a suit of coarse unbleached canvas, about the colour of his hands, until he dressed for dinner,—a ceremony which consisted in putting on

an old frock-coat. The hours kept at Marmorne, as in most French country-houses, were comparatively early, and the family never dined later than six. After changing my dress, I found my way to the *salon*, and for a few minutes was alone in the quaint old room.

Being quite new to France, I was much more alive at that time to the strange foreign look about everything at Marmorne than I can be now, after years of use have dulled the sense of strangeness. By an effort of memory, I can still recall the feeling of being alone in that *salon*, and the intense pleasure with which I examined everything in it, and allowed myself to criticise what seemed to me the originality of its arrangements. An English drawing-room usually aims at some brightness or brilliance of aspect, but that of Marmorne was sombre and grave, relieved only by a certain richness which had nothing to do with gaiety. If it had not been for the plentiful flowers in the *jardinières* and the white embroidered curtains, that room at Marmorne would have been positively saddening. Nevertheless, in its sadness there was a deep and perfect harmony, both of colour and of character. It was of vast size, and hung with dark pomegranate velvet, in panels, set in wood so black as to resemble ebony, and which would have been perfectly funereal without their lines of gilding now dimmed by the lapse of time. The panels were of unequal size; and in some of the largest were hung pictures by artists of the French and Italian schools, but none more recent than the beginning of the eighteenth century, and the frames looked as if they had not been regilded for the

last hundred years. The great oak floor, inlaid in patterns with yellow and black woods, shone like dark ice, and was almost as slippery; whilst there were only two or three little islands of carpet on which the timid traveller could find himself in safety. If there were anything modern in the room, it must have been the mirrors, which were larger and more perfect than any made before the present century; but, instead of being adorned with the flashy gilt frames so common in modern Paris, these new glasses had been judiciously inserted in the old panels, and seemed as if they had always belonged to them. I was looking at one of these large sheets of glass, and admiring the mysterious effect of the noble old room as it appeared in the semi-obscurity of reflection, when I became aware of a stately moving figure, and, turning suddenly, found myself face to face with Mademoiselle Ada de Marmorne.

XIX.

In this narrative I shall speak of her simply as Ada; partly from a habit acquired in recent years, and partly for the convenience of the reader. The formal "Mademoiselle de Marmorne" would be more appropriate in the earlier portion of this narrative, because at the time spoken of here I did not think of her as "Ada."

She was not a girl then, but already a woman twenty-two or twenty-three years old, very tall, almost too tall if her figure had been less graceful. She came to me with perfect ease of manner, and, in French, gave me a

welcome to Marmorne. When we sat down on opposite sides of the fireplace, I had leisure to look upon her face. It was the most astonishing translation into beauty of her father's brown, rough, weather-beaten, and curiously plain physiognomy. M. de Marmorne was plain almost to ugliness, if so kind and intelligent a countenance as his could ever possibly be ugly. His features were not well shaped in themselves, and they looked as if they had not been properly put together; indeed, notwithstanding the dignity of his manner, it seemed always possible to trace a lurking disposition to amuse himself with the effect his face produced on others. Ada was strikingly like him, but the crooked features of his face were set into a statuesque regularity in hers; the earthy opacity of his complexion became in hers a rich semi-transparent darkness; the strong bristly grey hair of the man, in which there were still three black hairs for one white one, became on the woman's head an abundant *chevelure* of glossy black. The keen intelligence of the father's eye was reproduced in the daughter's, but veiled, as it were, in hers by feminine self-restraint. His too abundant and too shaggy eyebrows, which hung like tufts of grass before a hollow in the rocks, were replaced in her by pure dark lines in two low regular arches. With all these differences, great as they were, Ada was her father in a woman's form.

I know that she asked me several questions, and that I answered as if at random. What the questions were I know not. I cannot remember a word she said to me then; but I retain, in all its distinctness, the first vivid

impression of her face. Its prevalent expression was that of power and resolution, but resolution of a patient rather than a combative character.

> "Her eyes were deeper than the depth
> Of waters stilled at even."

But there was no treachery in their depth; and from the first I had a sense of safety in the presence of Ada de Marmorne, a positive assurance that she was to be fully trusted. Better would it have been for her peace had she never known any of us, never heard the name of Segrave!

XX.

Gradually the first benumbing shock of her commanding beauty gave way to a more intelligent admiration. I began to see how and why she was so beautiful. I became capable of something like the effort of analysis. There were the physical perfections of form, and, notwithstanding the absence of what is commonly called rich colour in her hair and complexion, there was perfectly harmonious colouring, which Rubens might not have cared for, but which would have delighted the eyes of Velasquez. But a woman might have all these merely external charms, and yet not produce a tithe of the effect which Ada produced on me: so true it is that the highest beauty cannot dispense with the aid of intellectual and spiritual influence. It was not merely because her nose and eyebrows were finely shaped, her eye liquid and dark, her teeth regular and good, that this remarkable woman had power over the hearts of men;

for you felt in her presence that behind all this was a beauty of thought and sentiment which illuminated the eye continually, and had even, in the course of years, ennobled the material structure of the very features themselves. The frank enthusiasm with which I speak of Ada ought not to mislead the reader with the idea that I was ever enamoured of her. The notion of love never once occurred to either of us, but we rapidly became very trusting and intimate friends.

XXI.

She led a strange life at Marmorne for a young Frenchwoman of her rank. A certain natural independence of character, joined to the peculiar circumstances of her position, had made her, at eighteen, mistress of her father's home. With her high notions of duty, and her invincible resolution to do thoroughly well whatever seemed to be required of her, she gradually became not only commander in her own sphere, but her father's lieutenant also, and, during his scientific or antiquarian expeditions, looked after his lands and forests. In this way, though Ada de Marmorne had become an excellent *châtelaine*, and could, no doubt, have written such an encyclopædic work as the 'Maison Rustique des Dames,' it must be confessed that she had entirely lost sight of that ideal which in France is associated with the *jeune fille*. She was herself conscious of this, and even in our first interview conveyed something like an apology for what, in France, might be condemned in

her as an eccentricity. "Our families, Mr Segrave," she said, "have sustained the same loss. Lady Segrave and our mother died within a short time of each other: I believe in the same year. Had we lived in England, where young ladies enjoy a freedom which is not permitted to them in this country, we might have been better able, in some respects, to perform certain duties which have fallen upon me."

M. de Marmorne came in just as she was speaking, and caught the end of the sentence. There was a frankness in his expression of sentiment for which, as an Englishman, I was not fully prepared; but the sentiment was so evidently sincere that he could not be accused of affectation in the matter. "What nonsense is Ada talking?" he began. "Better able to perform certain duties! what duties? She's the best and dearest daughter a man ever had. She manages everything and everybody." Here he gave her two sonorous kisses on each cheek. "And to think that she's only a *jeune fille!* She scarcely looks like one, does she, Mr Segrave?"

I was muttering something about my ignorance as an Englishman, when the door noiselessly opened, and there entered an elderly lady, followed by a very young one, a girl of seventeen.

"Ah, now," said M. de Marmorne, in a mysteriously low voice, "that's what we call a *jeune fille* in France, Mr Segrave: that's my other daughter, Abeille, whom you *see*, but whom you will never *hear*. Deplorable misfortune! Deaf and dumb!"

M. de Marmorne looked so grave that I thought for an instant he was serious. "No, no," he went on, taking my arm in his great brown hand, "not really deaf and dumb, you know—only made so by conventionalism and this old lady. You may say whatever you like before Abeille: she is not supposed to hear, and she will behave exactly as if she did not hear a word. She *does* listen, though: I know she does."

The subject of these rather personal remarks had by this time acknowledged my bow with the faintest of imaginable salutes, and taken a chair at a distance from where we were grouped. She was not beautiful, and would never have Ada's commanding stature: she seemed to accept a position of perfect obscurity, as if no other could ever belong to her. I could not see her very distinctly at that distance; but she happened to be nearly opposite to me afterwards at dinner, and then I began to make, or fancy that I made, discoveries.

Though she was silent as a statue, and though her features had been trained to hide her thoughts by the mere absence of expression, I thought I saw, under all this negation of character, the traces of a character that was not negative. There were occasional gleams in her grey eyes which led me to suppose that she was listening attentively, and missed little or nothing of what was going on. She wore a white dress, of the utmost possible simplicity, with not a trace of jewellery of any kind, and sat looking, as it seemed, at nothing. Tea was served in the drawing-room, in compliment to me as an Englishman—Russian tea of exquisite flavour,

but only just strong enough to stain the water like amber; and Abeille, at a signal from her sister, brought a cup to where I was sitting with M. de Marmorne.

Her eyes looked down on the cup; and, as I rose and went half-way to meet her, she had to stop rather abruptly; then her eyelids were suddenly lifted, and she gave me the thin little specimen of delicate Sèvres ware with its clear and harmless contents. I could not help noticing what dainty little hands she had. I remember, too, a faint, a very faint, perfume that mingled with the fragrance of the tea. It came from some natural flower that she wore in her fair hair.

After that, her father sent her to fetch some plants that he wanted to show me. The way she did everything was exquisitely to my taste. Her movement of rapid and willing obedience as she left the room, her simple boldness in coming straight to me with the plants she carried, her sweet directness and unconsciousness of self, charmed me beyond measure. It seemed to me that I could have sat there and watched her, and found enough happiness and interest in watching her, as long as she had chosen to remain in that room and light it with her sweet presence.

M. de Marmorne made both his daughters play for me. Ada played with great power, and was evidently a cultivated musician. The thoroughness of her method proved a severity of previous study rare with amateurs of all classes, and found almost exclusively in those few amateurs of the male sex who have given years to the study of the piano. Abeille pleased me by choosing

subjects entirely within her much more limited capacity, and by relying on expression rather than any feats of execution. The practice of an art often reveals more of character than conversation itself, probably because the artist is more off his guard than the speaker: musical sounds, or the tones of colour, do not seem so dangerous and treacherous as words; and even if Abeille had talked with me quite freely, as did her sister Ada, I should still have listened to her playing with all the interest of curiosity. Much more, then, was I interested since Abeille never opened her lips. The simple airs she chose admitted great expression, and even required it. She played rather coldly at first, but that was from timidity. Soon her eye kindled, and she forgot us: a delicate flush came upon her cheek, her breast indicated a more rapid breathing, and the music became the expression of a true emotion.

When it ceased, M. de Marmorne put both the young lady and myself in a most embarrassing position; and I began to perceive that, with all his goodness, there was a certain pitilessness in his nature. "Abeille," he said, "has studied English nearly all the years of her life, and can speak it, no doubt, very fluently." In saying this, he gave the poor young lady a very significant look, implying that his belief in her proficiency was entirely assumed for the purpose of moral torture. "It would give me great pleasure," he added, with the air of one who requests a favour from a junior, "if Mr Segrave would speak English with this young person, who no doubt would derive great advantage from conversing

with a native of England." Abeille looked miserable, and said nothing. I began to wish the old gentleman twenty miles away on one of his botanical expeditions. It was plain, however, that he was resolved to carry his point, and put his daughter's English to the test, at any cost of misery to herself or to me. Under these trying circumstances, the best plan was to say something to her that she would probably understand: so I began—

"Do you read English, Miss Abeille?"

"Yes, sir."

Then I said, very clearly and distinctly, separating the words as much as I possibly could. "And do you read with facility?" I thought it best, for a beginning, to approach as nearly as possible to a Gallicism.

"I read easily with a dictionary."

"And you understand me,—you comprehend me easily when I speak?"

She began to look pleased and grateful, and, lifting up her eyes with a rather arch expression, said with a very fair pronunciation—

"You are kind to speak slowly to me, so I understand all that you wish to say."

I knew M. de Marmorne did not speak English at all; but I was not quite so sure about his eldest daughter and the old lady who sat silent with her knitting. However, I ventured with what follows.

"Your father is rather hard upon you in making you speak English to me. Let us revenge ourselves by speaking it a great deal."

She smiled, and answered very readily. "It is a re-

venge that will please my father much. He is content to hear me speak, very content: he never heard me speak before, and he believed that I would be incapable."

"Does your sister understand us; and that lady, does she understand us too?"

"No sir; my sister will speak Italian with you if you will, but not English: that lady is equally ignorant of that tongue. I alone know a little English: I learned it of another governess whom I had when I was more young."

"I think your pronunciation is very good for a person who has never been in England; and you have never been there, I suppose?"

"No, sir; I have never traversed the canal, but my governess had been at London during one year."

M. de Marmorne was looking on with astonishment and pleasure depicted upon his countenance. "Continuez donc," he said; "ça me fait plaisir de vous entendre causer—un plaisir peu intellectuel, cependant; car je ne comprends rien de tout ce que vous dites."

Thus encouraged, I went on with my questions; for any conversation with the young lady must, as I very quickly discovered, consist entirely of question and answer. However, it was something to get answers; and the charm of her quaint construction of phrases and strong foreign accent was quite enough to give interest to our talk, though the subjects of it were not such as to interest the reader. It is one thing to hear words from the lips of a very interesting young lady, and quite another thing to read them in the cold, mechanical regularity of type.

When I thought enough had been done to prove that Mademoiselle Abeille was not a false pretender to learning, I tried to turn the conversation to French again; but M. de Marmorne would make her translate something, and at sight. I happened to have with me a pocket edition of 'The Lady of the Lake,' which she had never read. She translated a page of it with very little assistance, choosing her words well: in fact, from being more in the habit of translating than I was, she accomplished the feat more successfully than I could have accomplished it myself, needing only a word here and there, and, once the word given, arranging the passage with great skill. M. de Marmorne seemed much gratified with this result, and particularly begged me to speak English with Abeille as much as possible during my stay. The reader may well believe that I obeyed this injunction to the letter, and the more willingly as I soon discovered that the sense of duty and obedience which made the young lady so totally uncommunicative in her own language disposed her to speak mine with comparative freedom. She still remained for me very much of an enigma, however; and it was not until later that I became aware of the real character which lay hidden under the mystery of the manners which in France are thought necessary to a girl in her station of life.

XXII.

The next morning's post brought a letter from Emil. He saw no probability of being able to leave London for

some weeks, and made very minute inquiries respecting the details of our French estate. Towards the conclusion of his letter, there were, as was natural, some compliments for the family I was staying with, and an apparently careless question about Mademoiselle de Marmorne. "She must be a confirmed old maid by this time," he said. "I used to think her handsome; is she so still?" There was no special allusion to the younger sister, who, no doubt, had been a mere child when Emil had visited Boisvipère.

My father wrote to me also, in rather a melancholy tone. "I had done wrong," he said, "to give such a description of the forests about Boisvipère, as Julius had got the notion of transferring his experimental wild life from Segrave Park to our woods in France, where he hoped to kill wild boars in the winter," in which case my father complained that he would be left quite alone in his house. A day or two later, came a letter from Julius himself, which at least had the merit of brevity.

"I am coming to Boisvipère. Expect to start next week. Don't mean to sleep under any roof, but shall rough it in the forest. Get two good men for me."

Hitherto I had not informed our French friends of my brother's ambition as a traveller, and the discipline with which he was now actually preparing himself for his proposed career; but this letter made it expedient to do so. I expected to hear his projects, and especially his present manner of life, treated with the amused curiosity which they excited amongst our friends at Segrave: but, although M. de Marmorne and his daughter were greatly

interested by what they heard, it was a serious and not a sarcastic interest; indeed, both of them took Julius *au sérieux*, from the very beginning. In the evening, M. de Marmorne brought out a large atlas, and was soon deep in the study of the continent of Africa, with its great blank spaces of undiscovered country. "If I were young again, I would go with your brother willingly," said the old gentleman: "what a glorious enterprise he has before him! I think those blanks in the heart of Africa are more interesting than anything that will ever be written there. How the blanks on the world's map lessen! How little is left to be discovered! Your brother does well to hasten: had he been born a few years later nothing would have been left for him." Ada asked me question after question about the discipline to which I had said that Julius was then subjecting himself. Seeing her so much interested, I went into the minutest details of his life,—the preparation of his own food, his apprenticeship to the common trades, his rude habitation and habits. She listened quite seriously: the grandeur of the purpose was all she saw, or cared to see; whatever may have been mean or ludicrous in any detail, she passed over as merely accidental. A smaller mind would have fixed on the ludicrous detail, and chuckled over it, and forgotten the noble whole.

XXIII.

Julius came to pay his respects to M. de Marmorne before entering upon his wild life in the forest, and stayed

several days with us at the chateau. He was struck from the first with Ada's beauty, but did not seem, I fancied, to take so much pleasure in her society as I had done. "She's very handsome, you see, Adolphus," he said to me; "but I don't get on properly with her. I don't think I'm clever enough. I don't generally get on quite so well as might be desirable with those *very* clever women." In fact, Julius was afraid of Ada; and the more she did to overcome this timidity of his, the more it seemed to grow upon him. He soon became very intimate with our kind host, who was never tired of hearing everything about the great African project. I observed, too, that a relation of pupil and master established itself between them. Julius had all the strength and courage necessary for an explorer, but his scientific baggage was rather light. M. de Marmorne, of course, discovered this very soon, and in his kind way endeavoured to supply the deficiency by interesting Julius in the contents of his collections. They passed some hours together every day in the museum at Marmorne, whilst I was looking after the workmen, who had already begun the works on the stream at Boisvipère. Julius became so much interested in these studies that his intention of roughing it in the forest was postponed from week to week, and we both lived at Marmorne very much as if we had been members of the family there. The days passed rapidly and pleasantly, the only drawback to our happiness being my father's continued ill-health, which gave a despairing tone to his letters, and caused Julius a good deal of secret pain, I am sure, in the recesses of his conscience.

"It would have been better, perhaps," he said to me one day, "if we had not both left Sir Anthony at the same time; but you are here on business." Julius seemed to imply that he would be glad to take the business off my hands if I would go back to Segrave; but every day's experience proved that, unless we intended to burden our friend M. de Marmorne with the continual trouble of looking after workmen, I must remain in the neighbourhood for months. The chief works had been undertaken by a contractor, but I had many minor matters outside of the contract which it was necessary to look after personally; and even in the execution of the contract itself our interests would certainly have suffered without the constant presence of some capable representative. I did not consider Julius, in his present state of mind, to be the fittest possible person for the direction of a piece of business which but slightly interested him. The longer he remained at Marmorne, the less capable he seemed of absenting himself, even for a day. He accompanied M. de Marmorne on his little expeditions, but always returned with him to the chateau. In these excursions, I sometimes took a share, but more frequently passed the time at Boisvipère, where I now had a sufficiently comfortable bedroom. The chateau of Boisvipère was nearer the little valley which we were about to convert into a lake.

XXIV.

I had rather frequent letters from Emil, who, as the real manager of my father's property, claimed to be in-

formed on all points respecting the works we had undertaken. At the same time, he asked some questions about our way of life, and I told him pretty accurately how everything was going on. He repeatedly inquired whether Julius had taken to roughing it in the forest, and expressed some surprise on learning that he remained indefinitely at Marmorne, and had not even constructed the hut in which he proposed to winter. Soon afterwards, Emil suddenly announced that he would come personally to Boisvipère, and wished to have a bedroom prepared in the chateau.

He arrived three days after his letter, and came at once to Boisvipère without going to Marmorne. He reached the place in the evening, and we dined together at eight o'clock in the quaint old *salle-à-manger*. The keeper's wife cooked my meals, and served them on some old porcelain which remained at Boisvipère. To my astonishment, Emil professed a scrupulous delicacy about abusing the hospitality of M. de Marmorne. He praised me for my proper feeling in having a room at Boisvipère. He admitted that the house could not be considered a very cheerful place of residence, but such as it was it belonged to us, and it became me better to make use of it than to be continually dependent upon our friends. "Why could not Julius join us?" he asked. "If we were all three together, the place would be endurable enough."

Though I had told Emil that M. de Marmorne and Julius were away on a geological expedition (our host had kindly undertaken to give my brother lessons in

geology), he went to Marmorne the next morning, and did not ask me for my company: in fact, he clearly hinted that I should be better employed at the new lake. What passed during his visit I know not; but as the ladies were at home and he knew the fact beforehand, it may be presumed that he found in their society a sufficient reward for his journey. Nevertheless, on his return to Boisvipère in the evening, I perceived a shade of something stronger than mere dissatisfaction on his countenance, and he spoke with sarcastic severity about our brother. "Julius came here to rough it," he said, "and to prepare himself for his great expedition; and the way he is roughing it is by staying week after week with that hospitable old gentleman at Marmorne. He has no real energy or decision. It is my belief that this famous expedition will be abandoned."

"Well, Emil," I answered, "and if it is abandoned nobody will be sorry, I suppose. Certainly, my father will be delighted, and you yourself never said anything in favour of the idea."

"Certainly not, when it was a mere proposition. But now that it has been announced to all the people we know, and talked about in the newspapers, Julius has staked his honour upon it. He cannot decently draw back. He quitted his profession to undertake it: if he shrinks from it now, he will look like an irresolute fool. Why did he ever leave the army? When a man has so little determination of his own, the best place for him is a place where he has merely to obey orders." He said much more to the same purpose, which it is unnecessary

to repeat. It was easy to foresee that he would say the same things to Julius himself, when the opportunity offered.

XXV.

On M. de Marmorne's return, Emil and I received a kind invitation to dine with him. He scolded us very amiably for living at Boisvipère, and insisted upon it that there was some secret reason for a line of conduct so reprehensible and so extraordinary. "Monsieur Emil had probably," he suggested, "some illicit attachment in the depths of the forest there, some tie formed during his previous visits, which a persistent and ineffaceable *souvenir* now compelled him to renew." Then he pretended to have discovered the fair enchantress, a particularly hideous old woman who was always gathering sticks in the wood, and dwelt in a lonely cottage on its outskirts. Emil took the teasing very nicely, and answered M. de Marmorne with a clever imitation of French gaiety. Indeed, nothing struck me more forcibly than the remarkable ease with which Emil transformed himself into a Frenchman. His French manner was so very near an approach to the real thing that it became difficult even for me to decide whether that or his English manner was the assumed one. Perhaps the true solution of the problem may have been that *both* were assumed.

His way to Julius, whilst speaking French before M. de Marmorne, was delicately and affectionately fraternal. He expressed the great pleasure with which he saw the

probable abandonment of the African expedition,—"an expedition," he added, "which, however prudently conducted (and he had no doubt that Julius would have conducted such an expedition with great prudence), could not but be dangerous in the extreme. It would be most consoling to Sir Anthony to be assured that this idea had been given up." Julius, who spoke French less fluently than Emil, and was far from having the same perfect command of the *nuances* of French expression, abruptly told Emil that he was mistaken, that the expedition was still fully resolved upon, and not even temporarily deferred. On hearing this, Emil's countenance assumed a well-bred expression of surprise mingled with regret. "Having seen that Julius did not carry out his idea of encamping in the forest of Boisvipère, he had concluded that a change had taken place in his intentions. Perhaps, however, it was wise not to think of the forest: it had the reputation of being somewhat dangerous; there were still many vipers in it, he had been told, and if Julius prolonged his stay till the winter, he might be annoyed by the wolves. It was much better to stay at Marmorne, and to profit by the untiring hospitality with which M. de Marmorne always entertained his guests." Julius said that our host was kindly giving him instructions in science, which would be of the greatest use in Africa. Emil replied that M. de Marmorne had quite a remarkable degree of patience, and always sacrificed himself, only too completely, for the good of others. This of course drew forth protestations from our host, but Julius looked dissatisfied and thoughtful.

At length Emil, who knew M. de Marmorne's occupations and habits much better than either of us, asked whether he still attended the General Council of the Department. M. de Marmorne said that he did, and then added how much he regretted that he should be obliged, in a few days, to leave his young friends for some time on that account. "He hoped Monsieur Julius would remain at Marmorne," he added; but Emil at once interposed with a proposition that he should join us at Boisvipère, which Julius accepted. Emil finally had it arranged that Julius should return with us at once to Boisvipère.

After dinner, a very animated conversation in Italian took place between Emil and Mademoiselle de Marmorne. I do not speak Italian, but I understand it perfectly when spoken, and could not avoid hearing at least the substance of the conversation which was going forward at my side. Ada was one of those women with whom any subject, however trivial, has a tendency to enlarge itself and become a wide, intellectual pleasure-ground, or battle-field, as the case may be. They began by talking about houses in France and Italy, and my brother gave an interesting description of a villa not very far from Turin. From that, they passed to another villa, owned by a well-known political character. "What I dislike most in Cavour," said my brother, "is his falsehood. He was quite indifferent to truth; and this duplicity, you know, is strongly opposed to our English sentiments."

"I am aware," Ada replied, "that the English profess to be a particularly frank and honourable people." She

said this very politely, but there was a shade of scepticism in her tone. Emil, of course, perceived this, and saw that it was useless, with Ada, to advance the usual commonplaces with which our countrymen are accustomed to flatter each other and themselves. He added simply, that, although we had a high ideal in this respect, no doubt we very frequently fell short of it, and that there were certain occupations, of which politics was one, in which it was not always possible to be entirely unreserved. She caught up this word "unreserved," and remarked that there was a wide difference between mere reserve and the active endeavour to convey false impressions and to lead people wrong, especially when we availed ourselves of greater knowledge and experience to injure and mislead the more simple-minded. Her ideal character, she added, was the combination of high culture with honesty, and she looked towards M. de Marmorne with an expression which implied that a character of that order was to be found without travelling very far in search of it. She then appeared to have enough of this Italian conversation, and spoke to Julius in French about his geological expedition. "Had he followed out the porphyry country with M. de Marmorne? Had he noticed the beautiful colour of the roads there?"

XXVI.

I had not seen Julius and Ada together for some days, and was pleased to observe that his early timidity in her presence had given place to an appearance of ease.

He came to her side immediately, and they talked about the country he had been recently exploring. He had forgotten some names of places, and went to fetch the map of the French ordnance survey. As it was rather inconvenient to hold this map, he and Ada went to a table in another part of the *salon* and spread it out there. M. de Marmorne was soon called upon to elucidate some geological difficulty. Whilst they were occupied in this way, I began to speak English with Abeille.

"Do you ever go to Boisvipère?"

"Yes, sir: we go there sometimes in the beautiful season to make a picnic."

"And do you lunch in the house?"

"Yes, sir, when it makes too hot for that we may be able to lunch in the wood. The air is smothering in the wood in the great heats."

"And will you come to lunch with us when we are at Boisvipère?"

Here Mademoiselle Abeille looked very much puzzled, and seemed as if she wanted to consult the old lady, who always sat still, and never said anything. However, she perceived the difficulty of doing this, and made a decision of her own.

"Perhaps we will come to lunch when papa returns from the General Council."

XXVII.

It became very clear that this General Council, or any other matter which might occasion the absence of

M. de Marmorne, would separate us almost entirely from the young ladies. For my part, I knew that I should miss the little English conversations with Abeille, and the more intellectual French ones with her sister Ada. But Emil had a look of satisfaction when he heard the Council mentioned. He got Julius away the next morning, after the little *déjeûner* of *café au lait;* and we all three lunched together at Boisvipère. "They are very hospitable at Marmorne," he said to Julius; "but we ought not to abuse their hospitality. The old man is so excessively delicate towards a guest that he would put off the most important business rather than leave him."

Beyond this hint, Emil said nothing to Julius of a disagreeable kind that day. He ceased to feign a belief that the African expedition was abandoned: on the contrary, he talked of it with unwonted interest and respect, recurring to it again and again. He advanced the opinion that it would be scarcely worth while for Julius to encamp in the forest of Boisvipère: he had already gone through a very serious apprenticeship to that kind of life. London was the place for getting information on all conceivable subjects. In London, Emil could easily place Julius in communication with men of science and travellers who would be of infinitely greater use to him than a respectable, old, provincial gentleman like M. de Marmorne. Before starting for Africa, it was clear that Julius ought to stay at least three months in town.

After dinner, we walked on the dreary weed-grown

terrace in front of the chateau. The sun had set in a yellow arid sky behind the imprisoning trees; and the parched, rough land seemed incapable of supplying nutriment even to the solitary donkey which was all it had to support. "What a horrible place this *is* to stay at!" Emil exclaimed, as if overcome by sudden sensations of overpowering *ennui*. "I mean to get away from it to-morrow. I've seen the beginning of the works, and had a talk on the subject with M. de Marmorne; and I mean to stay here no longer. Come with me, come back with me, Julius; do now, there's a good fellow," and he took Julius affectionately by the arm. "Come to London: that's the place for a man like you! You'll learn more about tropical botany in a fortnight at Kew Gardens, than you would learn here in the whole course of your life!" There was a frankness in his manner which seemed truly fraternal, and he added a little touch of brotherly tenderness, which took effect at once. "Perhaps I'm preaching on the advantages of London very much from egotism; for I have seen so little of you of late, Julius; and I'm afraid, dear old boy, that if you once leave Europe, it will be a long time before we get a chance of seeing you again. It would please my father too, I'm certain. You have very little to do at Segrave now; but if you settled in London for a few months, the old gentleman would come and stay there till you sailed."

Before we separated that night, it was settled that Julius should return with Emil to England the next morning. I was charged to convey their regrets and

adieus to the family at Marmorne, and to repeat a little fiction about a letter which required their immediate presence in London.

XXVIII.

M. de Marmorne's absence at the chief town of the department did not exceed ten days. I passed these days drearily enough at Boisvipère, and neither heard nor saw anything of the young ladies. When the old gentleman returned, our intercourse became very frequent; but I seldom stayed at Marmorne more than a couple of nights. I thought it best to set up a little establishment of my own at Boisvipère. The keeper's wife, who lived close to the chateau, was really a good cook, having been bred in the wine districts of Burgundy, where the people of both sexes are all culinary artists, more or less; and she continued to prepare my meals for me. As she kept the two rooms I used in sufficiently good order, I did not need another female servant, but wanted a man-servant, and was fortunate in meeting with a strong, good-tempered fellow, who suited me very well, and would turn his hands to anything. I bought two saddle-horses, and seldom passed a day without riding a good deal. In this way, the time passed very pleasantly; the constant exercise greatly invigorated my health, and the first dreary impression that Boisvipère had given me, changed almost to a feeling of home. Even the extreme solitude of the place was not altogether unpleasing, and the belt of forest seemed a defence against the intrusion of the world.

I had a little *appartement* of three rooms in one of the pavilions for eating, sleeping, and study; and I had them made cheerful with fresh paint and papers. As to their furniture, I chose a few things from the other rooms which soon wore a familiar air when they came into daily use. M. de Marmorne made me a present of some engravings; and my lodging, with the profound peace which reigned around the whole place, and the total absence of everything in the shape of disturbance or interruption, became the very model of what is most suitable to a student. I gave myself literary work to do at Boisvipère, planned so as to last me several months, and it enabled me to pass many lonely hours without the shadow of *ennui*. Still, I closed my books not unwillingly sometimes when a horse was brought to the door, and I rode off through the forest towards Marmorne, on a wild rough road made for the bullock-carts that carried the wood, and unfit for every other vehicle.

XXIX.

It became more and more agreeable to me to speak English with Abeille. As we knew each other better, I allowed myself to correct her faults, but reluctantly, as it deprived me of the pleasure of hearing her make them. Many quaint turns of expression were lost to me gradually in this way, and even the foreign accent, which seemed prettier than the most correct pronunciation, became a good deal weakened as my pupil imitated our own far less charming tricks of speech. The pleasure,

however, of teaching her was so great that I felt compelled to go forward.

One day, to my considerable surprise, M. de Marmorne announced that two other pupils desired the advantages of my advice, and it turned out that he and Ada had been working assiduously together in secret, and had already mastered the English grammar and a rather extensive vocabulary. They had an abominable book that taught pronunciation, representing *the* by *zi*, and informing them that the English *w* was sometimes pronounced like the double *s*, as in the name of Law, the financier, which was pronounced Lass. It became necessary to unlearn all this. There was something very touching in the patient perseverance of the old gentleman, and especially in his extreme modesty and submissiveness. "Perhaps I am an old fool," he said, "to attempt a new and difficult study like this at my time of life; but I am a student in other things still, and so why not in languages also? My theory is, that old people generally cannot learn, merely because they have long lost the habit of learning; but I have been learning all my life, and have never lost the habit at all. This is the way I try to persuade myself that there is a chance for me. So I begin boldly; and, as I shall most likely die before I have done much more than master the rudiments, I hope an old student will be allowed to continue his harmless labours in another world." He believed seriously that he would study languages and sciences in Paradise, and find there excellent libraries, and a flora of unimaginable novelty and richness.

It was very interesting too, in another way, to see how a woman already so accomplished as Ada applied herself to the arid labour of elementary learning. There was no shrinking from trouble, no impatience of the slowness of gradual progress, but a firm and steady advance, leaving nothing undone behind it; in a word, the steadiness of one who has been self-disciplined, and has learned the art of learning.

XXX.

In the month of November, Julius was to start from London; and Emil wrote to me to say that, as our brother would not pass through France, it would be well if I came to England to see him before his departure. It struck me as rather odd that this had not come from the traveller himself: however, I quitted Boisvipère at once, and arrived in town after a rapid journey. My father had taken a house at Kew, because Julius wanted to study tropical botany there; and they had passed together several months, which both probably felt were likely to be the last they would pass together upon earth. For, although Sir Anthony's health was not visibly worse than it had been for some years, he knew that life was slowly ebbing away from him.

I went straight to Kew without calling at Emil's chambers. Julius was surprised to see me; and the first thing he said was that he had intended to visit me, in passing, at Boisvipère. "My plan is to go by Marseilles and Egypt down the Red Sea to the east coast of Africa,

and I had intended to see you on my way through France. But it is very kind of you to come." Emil joined us in the evening, and affirmed that his message to me had been dictated by the erroneous notion that Julius would sail round the Cape of Good Hope. He apologised to both of us very prettily, and said he was sure I should not regret my journey, as it made me see more of Julius and something of Sir Anthony. After that evening, Emil was too much engaged with legal business to be often with us at Kew; and the days slipped by till that of my brother's departure was finally and irrevocably fixed.

It was naturally arranged that I should accompany Julius as far as Dijon, and Emil promised to give nearly his whole time to Sir Anthony after the separation. "You will probably see M. de Marmorne on your way through France," Emil said to Julius; on which Sir Anthony remarked that if Julius had any time to spare, he had better remain a day longer with his old father. "It is probably the last we shall spend together, my boy," he said very sadly. Julius was evidently struggling with a great inward emotion, as he answered that he was very anxious not to miss the steamer at Marseilles, and might possibly feel tired at Paris; railway travelling always tired him, and it was a long spell of it through France. Emil asked what hotel we should stay at in Paris, and Julius told him that he should put up as usual at Meurice's.

The preparations for my brother's expedition at length were finished. His heavier baggage had been despatched

before, and two Englishmen who were to take a part in the expedition were sent forward with the rest. My brother reserved for himself, at starting, nothing but the portmanteau of an ordinary railway traveller.

XXXI.

I shall remember, as long as I live, the day he quitted Kew. We were to leave for Paris by the evening train, and therefore had the whole of the day before us. When a long separation has to take place, the morning is the right time for it. Then you get up early, and the thing is gone through with in a bustle. Merciful justice hangs criminals in the morning. But when you are to undergo a separation at six in the evening, the whole of the day before it is a melancholy and long-sustained effort at cheerfulness. Of course, as we were men and Englishmen, we overcame all visible emotion, and appeared as tranquil to the people about us as if the day had been one of the ordinary days of existence. Still, there was some French blood in all of us: my father's own mother had been a Frenchwoman, and we were not quite so stoical, or so indifferent, as the true and typical Englishman appears to be. As the sun sank lower and lower behind the sere trees by the river, my father became visibly dejected, and abandoned the pretence of talking about things that interested us no more. "Boys," he said to us all, "I want to have a quarter of an hour with Julius before he leaves me;" and we left them alone together. What passed during that solemn interval I

know not; but when Julius came out of the room the tears were streaming down his cheeks, and he could not utter a word.

Sir Anthony would go with us to the station, and walked feebly from the house leaning on his son's arm. At last the bell rang, and the pitiless engine came up, growing larger and larger, and shaking the earth beneath it. My father took our hands: he could not embrace his son before the wondering Englishmen on the platform. Just before the door was shut, he put his head into the carriage, and said, "God bless you, Julius, and watch over you;" and we saw his face no more.

The parting between Emil and Julius had not been quite so affectionate. Still it was not wanting in any of the proper and becoming external manifestations. I remember Emil wished my brother a pleasant voyage and a successful expedition, much as he would have wished him a pleasant shooting season in the Highlands of Scotland. Julius said nothing for some minutes, and turned his face to the window to hide it from our fellow-passengers; but after that he said to me, "Do you think Emil cares?"

XXXII.

We reached Meurice's at nine in the morning and had baths. After the baths, we breakfasted together, when the waiter knocked at the door and brought a telegram. Julius tore it open and glanced over it. His countenance fell, and he tossed the paper to me. It was as follows:—

"I have just learned that the Marmornes are at Nice.

EMIL."

"The fact is," Julius said, "I thought it was their time for being in Paris, so I intended to seek them up here. However, as they are at Nice—" Here he had to sign the receipt for the telegram. After the man was gone, Julius started suddenly from his chair, and with an expression on his countenance which I had never before seen there, a look of suspicion already active and indignation prepared to burst forth into sudden flame, slowly uttered the question, "*Are* they at Nice, Adolphus?"

I could not remember that the De Marmornes had ever expressed the least intention of going southward. It was not a habit of theirs to winter in the south. When they quitted Marmorne, it was usually either to go to Paris, or to pass a few weeks in a provincial city where they possessed an old-fashioned house. They had no residence in Paris, and as they usually stayed there with friends whose names were not even known to me, it was useless to make inquiries.

"There is a telegraph station within eight miles of Marmorne. We can get an answer before evening."

So we telegraphed. Neither of us believed Emil. The answer reached us at 2 P.M. "Sommes tous chez nous."

XXXIII.

We started by the evening train for Dijon. The nearest way from that city to the chateau of Marmorne

lay through a rocky gorge in the Côte d'Or behind one of its most famous vineyards, but no public conveyance passed that way. It was a narrow wild road, fit only for equestrian travelling, but by taking it we should save a night. I therefore telegraphed to Marmorne to have horses sent half-way, and we hired others at Dijon to meet them. The eagerness of Julius to get to Marmorne was really surprising. He was in a fever of excitement, and talked incessantly as he rode rapidly by my side. He was what the French call *exalted*, lifted up above the level of his ordinary nature. Even his physical beauty seemed heightened and transfigured. His cheek was flushed with something beyond the mere energy of exercise, his eye glittered with an unwonted brightness. He spoke of the beautiful scenery we were passing through, the narrow glens, and broader valleys, and vast expanses of table-land above them. Then he launched into fervid descriptions of the unknown lands that he was destined to discover. "It is as much a mistake," he said, "to think of Africa as a desert, as it would be to believe that all England was a grouse moor. There are deserts there; but there are also fertile valleys and plains, and glorious rivers, and lakes such as nothing in Europe will bear any comparison with. I may come some day on a lake grander than Geneva, and surrounded by far more magnificent vegetation, where the wild elephants bathe in herds, and thousands of antelopes drink, and no European has ever either fished or floated. That is the travelling worthy of a strong fellow like me!" He looked so bold and powerful that every-

thing seemed within the range of his possible achievements. "I will become famous, Adolphus: my name shall live with the names of Livingstone and Speke. I will connect their discoveries by links of my own finding; I will complete the work they have begun, and ascertain the ultimate sources of the Nile! Many a river is flowing there, many a lake lying tranquil in its great basin, waiting for its discoverer. Some of them may be discovered by me, and named by me for all generations of civilised men. Why should there not be a Segrave Nyanza after Sir Anthony?" He paused an instant, and then went on in a tenderer and less confident tone: "I hope the old gentleman will live to see me home again at Segrave, arranging my great African museum with all my spoils. He seemed dejected when we left him, but he will surely live long enough to see me back again." I expressed a belief, which I hardly felt, that there was every probability of this.

"I can *not* make out that telegram of Emil's. How can he ever have heard that the De Marmornes were at Nice? I believe it was a pure invention to get me through this part of the country without stopping. He had the same object in view, very probably, when he got you to London. Intensely clever, that lawyer brother of ours! Upon my honour, Adolphus, I don't believe a syllable he says."

"You know very well," he went on, "what I am going to Marmorne for, and he knows it too. I am going to ask for Ada. And let me tell you that I feel by no means confident about the answer, but I want to be

safely engaged to her before leaving Europe. She's not to be had for the asking by any eligible aspirant. I'm an eligible aspirant, but I don't feel any confidence on that ground. Do you think I ought to ask the lady herself or her father?"

I recommended Julius to ask M. de Marmorne first, or to intrust me with the business if he preferred it. Such duties, I explained to him, were in France very commonly performed by ambassadors. He thanked me warmly for this offer of service, and accepted it with great gladness. It was therefore understood that I should speak to M. de Marmorne on the earliest convenient opportunity.

Julius was anxious and uncertain about the result. He had little confidence in himself, and seemed to rely more upon Ada's kindness to him than upon any qualities of his own. The high courage with which he spoke of his African expedition contrasted oddly enough with his manifest timidity in speaking about Ada. She was so immensely superior to him, he said, that he could hope for nothing, except from her kindness and charity. And then he launched forth in praises of her goodness and beauty. "What a wonderful woman she is, Adolphus! I never saw any like her. She is so very *wise*, so good and wise. She will be an honour to the house she enters, wherever it is. I know I am not worthy of her yet; but when I come back from Africa, and have done something, I may stand higher in her esteem."

XXXIV.

We found my horses at a village half-way, and rested there an hour or two, after which we started afresh, and reached Marmorne in time for dinner. There were no guests in the house, which relieved us from some possible embarrassment. M. de Marmorne was as kindly cordial as ever, and showed especial interest in Julius, to whom he talked a great deal about his journey. Julius said little to Ada; but she and I talked together, and I made the best of the opportunity in conveying everything I could which might help my brother's cause. I laid before her all the detail of his plans; and she listened with an absorbed attention, looking at Julius frequently, as I was speaking, in a manner which seemed to augur well for him. Now and then her eye lighted with unrepressed enthusiasm, when I described what were believed to be the features of the unknown land which he intended to open out to science. "His life is staked on the enterprise," I added; "and we cannot tell if we shall ever meet again." I watched her narrowly as I said this, and saw with secret pleasure that there was more than the wonted moisture in her eyes.

To keep Julius in suspense as short a time as might be, I told M. de Marmorne, when we were in the dining-room, that I wished to speak to him in his museum. The museum was a large room at a distance from those usually inhabited; and there was a comfortable little cabinet close to it, in which M. de Marmorne did all his

scientific and archæological writing. When we reached the museum, he said, "Come into the cabinet: I have a fire there." So I soon found myself in a great arm-chair opposite to him.

He listened very attentively, and I plunged *in medias res*. My brother Julius, I said, had determined upon this expedition to Africa; and his intentions had been made public before he was aware that he might be bound to Europe by a tie stronger than any which had previously held him; and now, when it was impossible to recede, he found that there was a bitterness in the idea of departure which he had never before imagined.

Here I began to reflect that, notwithstanding M. de Marmorne's strong affections and excellent sense, he was a Frenchman, after all; and that as I had come to negotiate a marriage, it would be prudent to avoid the mention of love,—a passion which is considered too volatile to be associated with so grave a matter of business as a matrimonial alliance. I therefore cut short the sentimental thread which I had taken up, and said boldly—

"En un mot, Monsieur de Marmorne, j'ai l'honneur de demander, pour mon frère Jules, la main de Mademoiselle Ada de Marmorne, votre fille."

The old gentleman immediately entered into this, and replied to me in the same key with extreme politeness. He felt honoured, and so forth; but, in short, somebody else had already bespoken the young lady.

"Not that I have formally accepted him as yet," he

added. "If Ada had been like any other young person, she would have been married four or five years ago; but she has been educated, or rather, has educated herself, *à l'Anglaise*, and thinks she ought to have a voice in these matters."

I begged to know if M. de Marmorne had any personal objection to my brother Julius. I pointed out that he was the eldest son, and would inherit the Segrave estates; that he had an unblemished character, and was both esteemed and respected by all who knew him, and more to the same effect, very carefully avoiding, however, anything like an allusion to the strength of his passion for Ada. M. de Marmorne listened to all I had to say, but observed that it was not possible to give an immediate answer.

It is very likely that Julius would have gone away to Africa without any decision (for, though Ada might have accepted him, the proposition could only reach her through M. de Marmorne, and he declined, for the present, to convey it), had not a little incident occurred which revealed the name of the other aspirant, and brought matters suddenly to a crisis. The postman reached Marmorne every day whilst the family were at *déjeûner*, and the letters were given us as we sat at table. By a very natural mistake, a letter bearing an English postage-stamp was handed to my brother, although addressed to M. de Marmorne. Julius recognised Emil's handwriting on the address, and, passing the letter to M. de Marmorne, told the story of the telegram we had received in Paris. He could not help telling it: he was

never very reticent when his feelings were in any degree excited.

M. de Marmorne, notwithstanding extreme kindness of heart, was rather a severe judge of anything like a moral delinquency, and especially severe upon people who seemed to him disloyal to family obligations. His notion (a French notion rather than an English one, I believe) was, that there ought to be quite an ideal frankness and affection between brothers; that brothers ought always to help each other, and never stand in each other's way, and never do each other any manner of harm, and always be glad to meet, and delighted to kiss each other on each cheek. So, when he began to perceive that Emil had attempted to get Julius southward by a false lure, the old gentleman's great, bushy eyebrows gradually contracted themselves into quite a terrible frown; and his visage, always plain at the best of times, was contorted into a shape which would have astonished its owner himself, if he could have seen it in a looking-glass. Ada was alarmed, and asked what was the matter. Even Abeille, perfectly trained in perpetual silence, broke it with an irrepressible exclamation.

"Your brother," said M. de Marmorne, "will probably gain nothing by his stratagem."

"What *could* he gain,—what could he hope to gain? The whole thing is to me perfectly inexplicable."

M. de Marmorne pretended not to hear this; but begged leave to read his letters, and began with that of Emil. I rather expected that he would hand it to one of us; but, instead of doing so, he placed it carefully in

his pocket-book. After this, he turned the conversation into another channel, and did it in a manner so evidently intentional that we were obliged to follow. An hour afterwards, he invited me to go and see something in the museum. We passed through the museum, however, into the little cabinet.

Nothing strikes me as more remarkable in the manners of French gentlemen, than their transitions from the easiest possible behaviour to a behaviour of strict ceremony. On this occasion, M. de Marmorne was as ceremonious with me as if he had never seen me before. He had had the honour to inform me, on the preceding evening, that Mademoiselle de Marmorne had already been asked in marriage: at the same time, he had added that her marriage was not yet definitively arranged. Since then, a circumstance had come to his knowledge which had decided him to pursue a course different from that which he had traced out for himself when he last had the honour of conversing with me on this subject. He had now decided to reveal the name of the other suitor, and at the same time to inform his daughter that Monsieur Jules Segrave had asked her hand. His daughter might then decide to accept one of them or neither. It was unusual to leave such a decision to the young lady herself, but in this instance he would do so. The other gentleman who had done him the honour to ask for the hand of Mademoiselle Ada de Marmorne was Monsieur Emil Segrave.

Here, then, was the explanation of the telegram. Emil had made his proposal by letter. Ada had asked for time.

Emil had suspected that she awaited a visit from Julius; and, in order that Julius might commit the apparent slight of passing through France without calling at Marmorne, he had attempted, at the greatest risk of detection, to get him on to Nice. He had timed a letter to M. de Marmorne so as to arrive exactly at the moment when Julius would be on his way to Marseilles. Had the telegram produced the intended effect, the chances were, I think, that the letter which arrived in our presence would have been answered favourably, and at once.

M. de Marmorne drew forth his pocket-book and took the letter out. He read from it a single sentence, "Mon frère va directement de Paris à Marseilles, où il s'embarque." Now, considering that my elder brother, who was idle as a letter-writer and never wrote anything to a friend whom he expected soon to see personally, had not written a syllable about his departure to M. de Marmorne, the above sentence was admirably calculated to irritate the old gentleman against him. As matters had turned out, M. de Marmorne was irritated against the writer of the letter.

XXXV.

It was thought best to say nothing to Julius except that he was at liberty to ask Ada himself; but M. de Marmorne took care to inform Ada previously of what had passed.

I felt by no means sure that she would accept Julius even then. My great affection for him never blinded me to the fact that he was not a man of either deep or subtle

intellect, certainly not a man comparable intellectually to Emil. The love of science had little or nothing to do with his great African projects. African exploration afforded a fine field for his great courage and energy, which found no outlet in the army in times of peace. Had he been occupied in active warfare, the African expedition would probably never have suggested itself. As to his scientific studies, they were purely elementary, undertaken *since* the love of adventure had urged him towards wild travel; and it would greatly astonish me to learn that Julius ever displayed any of the acumen of a true devotee of science. He read little or nothing, took hardly any interest in the fine arts, which, I believe, he secretly despised; and in a word was a perfect English barbarian of the upper class. It seemed to me therefore very doubtful whether such a woman as Ada, if left to decide for herself, would bind herself to Julius for ever.

The result did not confirm these fears. Ada accepted Julius at once, and in a manner extremely flattering to his self-love. I had nearly an hour's conversation with her alone; later in the day, whilst my brother was closeted with M. de Marmorne. She frankly rejoiced in the prospect of becoming his wife: from the first, she said, he had inspired her with a feeling of quite unbounded trust and confidence; implying that her confidence in Emil had been more hesitating or more limited. Such a full assurance, she observed, could not be illusory: she not only trusted Julius, but she had confidence in her own trust. "I have much the same kind of reliance upon your brother that I have upon my

father himself. I believe in the existence of truth and goodness; and I believe in the instinct which makes me acknowledge them when they occur. I am profoundly happy." The question naturally suggested itself, how Ada would regard an absence so prolonged, and so full of danger, as that which lay before them, but I found that she had views upon that subject which gave her courage to think of it without pain. "He would not settle down at once," she said, "to a quiet life like ours: he needs action, and action on a grand scale. You see he could not even endure the life of a military man in time of peace. I believe that the happiness of his married life really needs the prelude of this rude and hard experience. And let me tell you," she added, "that I am ambitious for my husband. There are women whose business it seems to be to detach men from whatever can make them truly great, and to tame them to the level of household slaves or pets. When they have succeeded in doing this, they congratulate themselves on having accomplished a good work, and are satisfied with themselves for having brought a kind of savage within the pale of civilisation. And so it comes to pass that women, who ought to incite men to everything that is great, bring them down to everything that is little."

As she said this, Ada's face glowed with an inward enthusiasm, her nostrils perceptibly dilated, her eyes shone, and her physical beauty was heightened by the excitement of her mind. I was standing on the hearth: she was seated opposite me on a kind of sofa. She quitted her seat, came to me, and laid her fingers on my arm.

"Women have not always been drags and discouragements. In the old chivalrous times, they emboldened their knights to heroic deeds. If I said this before the little sceptical dandies of to-day, they would sneer at my innocence in accepting the tradition of chivalry at all: they are incapable of rising to that height, and prefer to think that none have ever risen to it. But I go to the fountain-head, to the best literature of that time, and I find sentiments expressed with all the unmistakable fervour of heartfelt conviction which, had they been kept alive till our own day, would have made a manly life easier to men, and a worthy womanly life easier to women." Then she asked whether I had ever met with a medieval poem, or series of poems, in manuscript, entitled "Le Livre des Cent Ballades." No. I had never seen it.

She went to a little ebony cabinet which belonged to her, and opened it with a gilded key. She took out a small volume with a heavy Gothic binding set with jewels, and fastened with massive silver clasps. "Only four old manuscript copies of this book are known to exist," she said, "besides this one; and this, as you see, has been fortunately kept in perfect condition."

It was a manuscript of the latter end of the fourteenth century, containing a hundred little poems of three stanzas each, every one of them adorned with a large initial letter at the beginning of the poem and a smaller one at the beginning of each stanza, illuminated with the most elaborate care. Just then, I admired these purely external matters; but I soon discovered that the book had more precious qualities, not visible to the bodily

eye. Along with a grace and elegance in versification which have rarely been surpassed in times of the most polished literary culture, and which are truly surprising in a time still belonging really to the middle ages, these little poems were inspired by a spirit of the very loftiest morality, not stern or austere, but gracious, kindly, and encouraging. The real subject or motive of the poet had been the elevation and amelioration of a man's nature by his faithful and pure love for a noble woman; and although in the course of the hundred ballads the poet allows a devil's advocate to plead on the other side with considerable wit and cleverness, he himself is as firmly true to his own convictions as the sternest of moral censors. The book was addressed rather to men than to women, and concerned them more directly; yet Ada had made it her own by frequent readings, and knew the best of the lyrics by heart. The stanzas of each lyric ended with a refrain common to all three. One of them ended thus:—

"Que vaillant fusse en toute place
Et que ma Dame le vouloit."

She pointed to this, and said that it expressed her own temper,—that she would neither marry a coward nor diminish in any way the courage of a brave man. "Had your brother been still in the army," she added, "I would have said *that* to him;" and she laid her finger on another ballad which ended with these verses:—

"S'en assault viens, devant te lance,
En mine, en eschielle, en tous lieux
Où proesce les bons avance:
Ta Dame t'en aimera mieux."

This being Ada's character and state of mind, it was obvious that the African expedition would not be hindered by her. She might suffer from the absence of Julius, but it would be in secret. She would probably not even ask him to defer his departure till the following steamer sailed. He, on his part, had a strong reason for avoiding delay, which was his anxiety not to hurt Sir Anthony's feelings. "I am anxious," he said, "to write to my father from Marseilles, just before going on board, that he may be sure what I said about that steamer was not a pretext. He would be deeply wounded if I lingered here at Marmorne after what he said to me about the probability that we should never meet again, and his anxiety to keep me for as long a time as I could spare for him before starting."

XXXVI.

Julius only stayed a single night at Marmorne after his acceptance. I shall never forget the morning of his departure. We had to leave before daylight, and our host's carriage was to take us to a branch line which communicated with the Paris and Lyons railway. I have said that there was a telegraph station within eight miles of Marmorne; but the nearest railway station was rather more than twice that distance, at a small town in the Nivernais. For five or six miles the country road from Marmorne was a narrow track through the woods, but a carriage could be driven over it easily; so we were to go in M. de Marmorne's rather cumbersome old equi-

page, with his pair of horses, that served both for farming purposes and this more aristocratic sort of usefulness. French people are never late for a railway train, at any rate in country places, and M. de Marmorne's horses, though strong enough, were by no means remarkable for swiftness; so he decided that we were to start at five o'clock in the morning.

Ada was already in the *salle à manger* when we came down. She wore a very plain morning dress and a white cap, and she was busying herself about the materials for our early breakfast. There were three bowls on the table for our *café au lait*, and the three customary *petits pains;* but, as we were going on a journey, she gave us the additional nourishment of eggs. Women find a great relief in household details when their hearts are sorely tried, and they feel it necessary to bear up against recent or impending sorrow; and I observed how careful poor Ada seemed about the boiling of those six eggs, which she superintended herself, having a pan on the hearth just in the glowing embers. Mademoiselle Abeille did not make her appearance: indeed, we did not expect to see her, as she had bidden adieu to Julius the night before. M. de Marmorne had been up already half an hour, making some preparations for different matters that he had to attend to in the market town, where we were to catch the train.

Ada seemed paler than usual; but she talked with apparent ease. The only requests she made were that Julius would limit his expedition strictly to two years, and write to his friends at Marmorne on every possible

opportunity. He consented to do both, which was really abandoning half his project; for, before his engagement to Ada, I knew that he had calculated upon a much longer absence. "I think I can bear up for two years," she said, "provided that I have a fixed date to look forward to, which will always be coming nearer and nearer. It is the indefinite which would wear me out most surely." She did not seem to perceive at that time that, although Julius might fix a date for his return, there would be a great deal of uncertainty about his being able to keep it, and, besides that, a wearing anxiety for all of us about what was happening to him during the long intervals, when all communication would be suspended. I shall ever remember one little thing she did, as we sat at table. She sought for something in her purse, which turned out to be a little almanac—one of those tiny almanacs that are often given to children—and she sought the day of the month. It was the feast of St Elizabeth. She quietly marked the place with her pencil, and gave the little book to Julius. "I shall only pass one St Elizabeth's day without you," she said; "and that will be rather a cheerful one, as it will be half the time to your return. After that, the months will be only months, and not a year amongst them. You will come back, will you not, for the eve of St Elizabeth in 1870? I shall wait for you, and expect you; and the next morning we will all get up early, as we have done now, and I will boil your eggs for you; but, instead of going to Africa, you shall go and hunt in our own forest, and come back with papa at night." Here, in spite of

her fortitude, Ada's voice trembled, and her eyes filled; for she was a woman, after all.

Five minutes later, we were driving through the dark wood, and their first pang of separation was over.

XXXVII.

I accompanied Julius to Marseilles, which we reached just in time for the Suez boat. He wrote a letter to Sir Anthony on board the steamer, amidst all the noise and confusion of the last half-hour in port,—luggage thumping on the deck before it was let down into the hold, passengers talking loudly in half-a-dozen different languages, the ship's officers shouting their orders. At last the bell rang, and all non-passengers had to go ashore. Julius gave me his letter for the post, took both my hands in his, and said, "If you were not in Europe, Adolphus, I never could bear to leave. There are two people whom I recommend most earnestly to your care. Watch over them alternately, and think constantly of both of them; for both may need you. You know whom I mean—my father and Ada. If I am not able to get back just at the end of two years, keep up Ada's spirits and courage as much as you possibly can. Try to make Sir Anthony's life as little dull and solitary as you can, till I come back." I promised, we pressed each other's hands, and I quitted the steamer. Neither of us had mentioned Emil, nor had Julius written to him since the receipt of the telegram at Paris.

I ascended the stony path which leads up to Nôtre

Dame de la Garde. From that height the eye may range over land and sea. The rich city of Marseilles is spread out like a map; you see the public edifices and promenades, the port and the shipping, the Chateau d'If on its island, the other islands, and the broad blue expanse of the Mediterranean, looking infinite as the ocean, yet bounded to the imagination by our geographical knowledge of the opposite African shore. The steamer which carried Julius had already passed the Chateau d'If, and was soon in the open sea. I watched and watched till she disappeared on the horizon, and nothing was visible of her but a trail of smoke on the blue of the distant sky.

Then I turned, as thousands had done before me, to enter the little chapel of Nôtre Dame de la Garde, and prayed for my brother's safety through all the perils which lay before him. Two or three white-sailed lateeners had left the port at the same time, and the sailors' wives were praying silently in the same little chapel by my side. For those they loved no perils were in store, except those of a well-known inland sea; but he for whom I prayed had before him all the dangers of water, land, and human treachery united. His little sea-voyage to Egypt was least of all in my thoughts. Beyond it lay the burning desert, the deadly marsh, the navigation of unknown waters, the ruthless hostility of savages.

When I came out of the chapel, the trail of smoke on the horizon was visible still, but very faint. I turned from the sight of it sadly, and walked with slow steps down the steep and stony path. I got to the hotel

somehow like a man in a dream. There was nothing for me to do in Marseilles; but the emotions of the last few days had left a weariness of which I now for the first time became conscious, and my body required food and rest.

XXXVIII.

I sat down close to one of the many windows in the Hôtel des Empereurs, which look out upon the famous Cannebière, and tried to amuse myself, whilst they were preparing my *déjeûner*, by looking at the passers-by. They were of all nations and languages to be found on the shores of the Mediterranean; and the varieties of type and costume distracted my attention from the sad thoughts which my brother's departure had left in me. Amongst the rest were of course some countrymen of my own, easily recognisable by the familiar English look and way of dressing, which both seem so perfectly reasonable in London, and yet just a little ridiculous on the Continent. "I wonder," I thought to myself lazily, "how many Englishmen will pass this hotel before the waiter brings my *déjeûner?*" and so began to count them. This amusement presently absorbed my attention; and I got to my thirteenth Englishman very pleasantly, with just the interest of a game, and no more, when I looked up the street for the fourteenth. At last he came, walking quickly towards the docks, as if he wanted to catch a steamer. I could not see him distinctly just at first, but recognised his nationality by his hat; then I got a glimpse of his face, which made me jump from my seat in aston-

ishment. He came nearer and nearer; he passed close by the window, but without looking towards me. I saw his face quite plainly, and doubt was no longer possible: that Englishman was Emil Segrave.

I was out of the hotel in two or three seconds and after him, being fully determined to get an explanation of that telegram he sent to us at Paris. Besides that, I felt the strongest curiosity about this sudden journey to Marseilles—a journey evidently in some way connected with Julius, and yet not announced to him beforehand, either by telegram or letter, which Julius would certainly have mentioned to me if he had received either one or the other. I had no difficulty in following Emil, but did not choose to stop him before I had found time to collect my own thoughts. He walked straight towards the place from which the Egyptian steamer had started, asked a question of a *sergent de ville*, and then went to the Place de la Bourse, to the office where Julius had paid his fare. I followed him inside. He asked to be allowed to refer to the book where the passengers wrote their names, gave a glance at the last page, saw that of Julius, and thanked the official politely with the satisfied air of a man who has found what he wanted. I knew that he would leave the office immediately, and so placed myself in the doorway with my face to the street.

"Pardon, Monsieur!" said Emil, as he tried to get past me. I made way for him and raised my hat. He gave a glance at me, recognised me, started, resumed his self-control instantaneously, and took my hand.

"Very glad to find you so easily, Adolphus: I hardly

expected to be so fortunate. I have missed Julius, unluckily. I have just come from Nice, where I expected to find him with the De Marmornes."

"The De Marmornes have not been at Nice."

"So I learned, of course, when I got there. Was misinformed by a friend in London, who seems to have mistaken some other De Marmornes for those we know. You went to Nice also, I suppose?" Emil asked carelessly.

"No, we did not. We knew that the De Marmornes were not in the habit of going to Nice; and, as they were not in Paris, we went to Marmorne and found them all at home."

Emil winced at this very perceptibly, in spite of his lawyer-like tranquillity of manner, but said with an appearance of perfect ease, "Oh, I am glad my telegram did not mislead you after all. Will you come and have *déjeûner* with me at my hotel?"

"I have ordered *déjeûner* at mine."

"Very well; then I will invite myself. You will have a hungry guest. I hope you have ordered a *bouille-abaisse:* you should never come to Marseilles without eating a *bouille-abaisse.*

'This Bouillabaisse a noble dish is,—
A sort of soup, or broth, or brew,
Or hotch-potch of all sorts of fishes
That Greenwich never could outdo;
Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffron,
Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace;
All these you eat at Terré's tavern
In that one dish of Bouillabaisse.'"

It was the first time I had ever heard Emil quote poetry in my life, if Thackeray's clever ballad is to be called poetry, which I suppose it fairly may be, especially towards its close.

Emil went with me to the Hôtel des Empereurs, asked if they had *bouille-abaisse*, and chatted in the most agreeable manner about the famous dish when it was served. They did not give us exactly the common fisherman's mess, invented probably by some fisherman's wife in the days of the ancient Phoceans, but rather that refinement upon it which the best cooks in the world have realised for the most fastidious epicures. It is absurd that sad and serious humanity should allow itself to be influenced by such trifles; but it is the simple truth that we were amused and pleased by our pyramids of variegated colour, rising, like the two Mounts St Michael at sunset, out of a shallow sea of ruddy liquid gold. Most lawyers are epicures; and Emil, in his bachelor life in London, had accustomed himself to a certain daintiness in food and drink which afforded him that pleasure and indulgence after hard work which, in some form or other, we all need, and take when we can get it. In France, this tendency of his had free play; and, though economical in most other things, he ate and drank expensively.

XXXIX.

I began to think it possible that what he said about his telegram might be true, and to repent rather of my own injustice in accepting so readily the interpretation

that Julius had put upon it. I did not yet venture to tell him of the engagement between Julius and Ada, nor did I hint at the effect produced by his telegram upon our friend M. de Marmorne. It seemed to me strange that Emil should have put himself to the trouble of the journey to Marseilles merely to ascertain whether Julius had really left by the steamer; but he replied to this unexpressed difficulty of mine by saying that he had a wealthy English client at Mentone, whom he had been obliged to see personally the day before, so he had left Mentone to see Julius on board the steamer. I did not believe that he cared enough about Julius to show quite so much fraternal solicitude as that, but Emil had always a very polite and gentlemanly way of putting things.

After *déjeûner*, he invited me to take coffee at a particular *café* which he patronised, and made me drink a remarkably good ruby-coloured *liqueur* which an Archbishop had once saluted with the ejaculation, "Ave, Regina liquorum!" Then he declared that he had nothing more to do in the south of France, and suggested that we should stay at Marseilles that day and the following night merely to rest ourselves, after which we could travel together northwards the next morning. We walked about Marseilles during the afternoon, Emil displaying his usual business-like activity in seeing the improvements; for he carried business habits even into his pleasures, especially into everything connected with travelling. The increased value of property in the improved quarters of Marseilles interested him almost as much as if the land had been his own: indeed, he never

passed a day in a strange town without becoming as rapidly acquainted with the leading economic facts and conditions of the place as an artist would be with its picturesque beauties, or an antiquarian with its relics of the past. All this time, I was revolving in my own mind whether or not he ought to be immediately told about the engagement between Julius and Ada; but he seemed in such good spirits that I felt disposed to spare his feelings for the present. It was evident that Emil drew conclusions favourable to himself from the fact that Julius had left for Africa at the time fixed; and he did not suspect that a decision had been so rapidly arrived at by M. de Marmorne and his daughter, which was fatal to his own hopes. My silence encouraged this delusion, and Emil looked like a man who had got happily rid of a rival. So far from affecting to regret our brother's departure, he openly showed his satisfaction. He made me dine with him very expensively at an excellent *restaurant*, and afterwards invited me to go with him to the theatre. I did not feel disposed to enjoy theatrical representations just then, and so pleaded fatigue. "Well, then," said Emil, kindly, "come and spend a quiet evening in my own room at my hotel."

I had by this time come to the firm resolution to let him hear his fate from M. de Marmorne, who, after all, was the proper person to communicate an answer to a demand about which I was supposed to be wholly ignorant, and I was preserved from any questioning of an embarrassing kind by Emil's belief in my ignorance of his offer. We passed rather a pleasant evening together;

and I thought that, since Julius had gone, my brother Emil seemed determined to treat me more fraternally than before. He talked about our father's health, in very appropriate terms, saying that one of us ought to be near him as much as possible, and that he had persuaded him to fix his residence at Kew, with only occasional visits to Segrave in the most favourable weather. By this arrangement, Emil could see my father almost every day without abandoning the practice of his profession. When Emil came to Boisvipère, he said that he would be obliged, to his great regret, to ask me to stay at Kew or Segrave, so as not to leave Sir Anthony alone, but his professional duties would make these absences in France of very short duration. He spoke, as the reader observes, just as if he had had no projects of marriage. Then he talked a long time about the management of the property at Boisvipère, saying that it was absolutely necessary for him to stop there a few days on his way back to Paris and London; that very considerable expense was being incurred which would require close looking after; and that, although M. de Marmorne was an excellent country gentleman, he was not so sharp as a man of business.

Whilst he was talking in this way, my eyes wandered about the room and finally rested on his portmanteau. There was an adhesive address-label upon it just above the lock. The address was in Emil's own handwriting. On the upper part of the label were the words "E. Segrave, passenger to Paris," but a pen had afterwards been run through the three last words, and "*voyageur*

à Marseilles" had been boldly written on the lower part of the label. To my mind, this seemed like very strong evidence that he had come straight to Marseilles and not been to Nice at all. Then I looked for the label pasted by the *employé* whenever a passenger's luggage leaves a railway station. That was conspicuous enough. The word "Marseilles" was on it in big black printed letters, and just above in the faint blue ink of a hand-stamp was "Paris," clearly enough legible, and then the date, too small and faint for me to make out without a closer scrutiny.

On quitting Emil for the night, I begged him not to trouble himself to accompany me to the street, and left him in his own room. Then I entered into conversation with the hotel-keeper's wife, an attentive and lady-like woman. After five minutes of talk, I begged to be allowed to refer to her visitors' book to see if a friend had passed that way. She acceded at once, and I found my brother's name. In the column headed "Where last," or its French equivalent, I found the simple entry "Paris," and no mention either of Nice or Mentone.

The next morning we started for Boisvipère.

XL.

The reader may remember that I had fitted up a little *appartement* of three rooms in one of the pavilions of the chateau of Boisvipère for my own personal use. I had had them thoroughly cleaned and rather prettily decorated, so as to make them a pleasant bachelor's home

for me during my visits to our French estate. One of them was arranged as a library, and I had sent down several boxes of books by luggage train from London. Emil scrupulously respected my independence in this little retreat, and had chosen rooms for himself in a remote part of the building on the ground-floor. Besides this, our independence of each other was still further increased by the fact that his windows looked into a narrow courtyard separated from the main court by a line of interior buildings; whilst mine did not look into a courtyard at all, but out upon the formal garden, and the dreary piece of land between it and the impenetrable belt of forest. I wondered, at first, how Emil could possibly choose a couple of rooms from which there was no view but stone walls. The view from my own windows was not beautiful, yet it was something to see the earth and the sky. As for Emil, he might as well have been in a court in the Temple, and this suggests the real explanation of his choice. His town habits followed him to Boisvipère; and such is the force of habit upon all of us, that he felt most comfortable when he could see buildings from his window. I had lived much more at Segrave Park than in London, and had a liking for space and air.

We did not see much of each other when we happened to be together at Boisvipère. We met at meal-times in the old *salle-à-manger*, and sometimes politely invited each other to our apartments to pass the evening. On our return from Marseilles, I privately resolved not to go to Marmorne until Emil had learned from M. de

Marmorne himself what had happened during my last brief visit with Julius. As I expected, he rode off to Marmorne the morning after our arrival, and did not ask me to accompany him. He returned in the evening, in time for our usual dinner-hour, which was seven o'clock. Notwithstanding the great command over his countenance which he acquired in the exercise of his profession, it now betrayed both disappointment and vexation. He said nothing so long as the servant was waiting, but when dinner was over he invited me abruptly to his own room. There he entered at once upon the subject which preoccupied both of us.

"I am surprised, Adolphus, that you did not inform me of this sudden engagement between Julius and Mademoiselle de Marmorne."

Now my desire was that Emil should remain ignorant of my own knowledge about his proposal. I thought it better for both of us that matters should remain as if I knew nothing about it. I had come by the knowledge accidentally; Emil had not chosen to take me into his confidence, and I never wish to seem to know too much, either about his affairs or those of any one else. I could not therefore tell him that I disliked being the first to announce bad news.

"Julius did not seem to wish that his engagement should be made public immediately."

"Made public! Really, Adolphus, I do think I have some right to complain. Am I simply one of the public for my two brothers? Do you mean to say that Julius and you had no intention of informing me

about the matter until you made it known to everybody?"

I simply answered that he very much exaggerated the offence. For my part, I had thought it best to let Julius announce the engagement himself, which he would certainly do in his first letter to Emil; however, this seemed to have been anticipated by M. de Marmorne. Even our father was not yet informed about it, and I did not see that Emil had any right to be told before Sir Anthony. As for me, I had known of it first by mere accident, because I had accompanied Julius, who had not informed me of his intention before we left England. I had always considered, and thought still, that when we came by a piece of information through accident, which would not otherwise have been communicated to us, our proper course was to act in all things exactly as if we did not possess it, unless some positive evil would certainly result from our silence.

Some men pull their moustache when they are not satisfied with the course of events. Emil, who was cleanly shaven, and had no moustache to pull, had a habit of squeezing his lower lip when matters seemed unpleasant to him. He squeezed it a good deal on the present occasion, but said very little. I, on my part, rather wanted to ask him a question; but it was a delicate question to ask. I wanted to know if M. de Marmorne had said anything about Emil's telegram which we received in Paris. The old gentleman, notwithstanding all his politeness, could be terribly straightforward when he felt that anybody had been acting

in a manner that he disapproved, and I wondered very much what sort of a reception he had given to Emil that day.

"You stayed to *déjeûner* at Marmorne, I suppose?"

"Yes, I did."

"Then you found M. de Marmorne at home?"

"Yes; and when he learned that I had been to see him at Nice, he wanted to keep me at Marmorne: but I declined, knowing by experience that it is utterly impossible to do a good day's work in other people's houses; and my legal business follows me everywhere. Look at all that heap of papers!" Here he pointed to a large table, entirely covered with business papers. He was getting up a heavy case, and preferred the solitude of Boisvipère, now that his hopes about Ada de Marmorne were at an end. I was glad that he did not suspect me of knowing anything about his failure; and I willingly refrained from making any further inquiries. What M. de Marmorne had said to him mattered little, since I was in possession of the results. I knew that Emil had found some means of persuading the honest old gentleman that the telegram was sent in good faith; but that was without importance. I had no wish to expose Emil unless it became absolutely necessary, and there was no probability that it would. Besides, although perfectly convinced of his unscrupulousness myself, I might find it difficult to convince others. He had the manners of a gentleman, and always obtained that degree of confidence which is given to a man who seems in harmony with what is called good society.

Matters, therefore, remained in a very quiet way during the weeks after Julius left us. Emil and I got on fairly well together, each living his own life almost independently of the other. He stayed at Boisvipère about a fortnight, finding that he could work there without fear of interruption, and then it became necessary for him to return to London. I remained some time longer, until the works for the new reservoir were suspended by a hard frost.

XLI.

I take advantage of this lull in the course of events, to describe somewhat more minutely certain persons and things in or about the chateau of Boisvipère, which it is necessary that the reader should be accurately acquainted with if he follow this story to the end. Our establishment was as small as it well could be. I have said already that the keeper, who was a married man, lived in a small house of his own amongst the outbuildings. His wife was a good cook, and an attentive active person; so she kept us very well, and our rooms were as tidy as we would permit her to make them. They had no children. Besides these, I had a young man-servant of my own, whose principal duty was to take care of my horses; but he also brushed my clothes, and attended to my little personal wants. This man slept in the chateau close to my own rooms, in the same pavilion. The pavilion was a sort of tower, of which there were four, at the angles of the mansion, with high mansard-roofs, resembling, though on a much

smaller scale and in ruder architecture, the well-known pavilions of the Louvre. When Emil stayed a few days at Boisvipère, the keeper attended to him. The persons just enumerated were absolutely the whole population of Boisvipère—I mean, of the chateau and its dependencies. There was a farm, at a distance of more than a mile, on our estate; and one or two other remoter homesteads might be discovered in the woods by following certain roads, if the discoverer did not lose himself during his adventurous quest.

The keeper's name was Joseph Migeon. He was a very powerful man, above the middle height, and of the muscular Burgundian type, with a very singular face, which once seen was not likely to be soon forgotten. It was an ugly face, with prominent eyes, a flat nose not quite in the middle, and a disproportionately large and powerful under jaw. Although the man had very muscular arms and legs, his cheeks were thin and almost hollow. His complexion was a cadaverous kind of brown; his skin had that appearance of insensibility which comes upon such complexions when they have been exposed for many years to all the vicissitudes of the seasons. Had it been pricked or cut, one would have felt surprised to see any blood come to the surface, The man wore a moustache consisting of a few very strong and bristly black hairs, and an imperial like that of Napoleon III., but not so thick as the Emperor's. His head was as round as a cannon-ball, and the grizzling hair was cropped quite short all over the skull, so that it looked at a little distance like a close-fitting skull-cap.

He had a pair of large ears, which stood out on each side of his face, as if to complete its loveliness; and these appendages were ornamented with neat little gold earrings—a feminine decoration which produced the oddest effect upon so decidedly masculine a physiognomy. The countenance was mobile, and its expression very variable. Sometimes it appeared animated with the greatest eagerness to please; and then, a second or two afterwards, there was an appearance of discontent, as if the man considered himself ill-used. On the whole, the discontented expression was decidedly the predominant one; yet what reason had Migeon to be dissatisfied with his lot? His health was excellent. He could walk thirty miles without the slightest fatigue. He led a life of unusual independence for a person in his condition. M. de Marmorne had put him at Boisvipère, with the assurance that he would never be deprived of his situation so long as he fulfilled its duties, which, to a man of Migeon's strength and courage, were in fact nothing more than the exercise necessary to his health. He had fair wages, was comfortably lodged, and lived in abundance on the produce of his garden and his gun. His wife kept a donkey with a little two-wheeled spring-cart, and often sold produce at a distant market. Of course, Migeon sold game too. A man in his situation, with nobody to look after him closely, is sure to make arrangements with the hotel-keepers, and derive profit from a quiet trade with them.

One portion of Migeon's history ought not to be passed in silence. He had been tried for murder.

French juries have a horror of capital punishment, and are usually as lenient to criminals as they possibly can be. Migeon was not found guilty of murder, yet he was not absolutely acquitted; for the jury gave him six months' hard labour for homicide. After that, he had a great difficulty about earning an honest living. The farmers and land-owners would not employ him, until at last M. de Marmorne, who was convinced of his innocence, had given him this post at Boisvipère, which kept him nicely out of people's way. Perhaps, too, M. de Marmorne may have thought that the man's evil reputation would be a protection to the place which he was set to guard. Here, then, may have been the explanation of that discontented look which I have just alluded to. Either Migeon felt that public opinion was unjust to him, and his six months' punishment, with its consequences, a hardship and wrong done to an innocent man; or else he might have been still more guilty than the jury believed, and his discontent the expression of an uneasy conscience. My curiosity about the circumstances of the homicide, or murder, was of course aroused as soon as I became acquainted with the real or supposed criminal. Migeon had at that time been just recently married. A young man, the son of a well-to-do farmer, who had amused himself a year earlier by courting the same girl, had been imprudent enough to say, in the village inn, "Joseph Migeon has no need to be so set up about his wedding, for he has only got my leavings." With that pleasure in reporting unpleasant sayings which characterises half-civilised humanity, one of the young

fellows present went and told this to Migeon himself. He immediately put the worst possible interpretation on the young farmer's words, which may only have been intended to convey the comparatively innocent idea of one courtship preceding another. The two met in the forest, with no witnesses. They fought with their wooden shoes in their hands, and Migeon dealt his adversary such a blow that death ensued instantaneously. He did not attempt to escape, but remained sullen and silent in his own cottage till the *gendarmes* came for him. On his trial, he pleaded simply that there had been a fair fight, which had ended worse for his adversary than he intended; but some people looked on the encounter in another light. It was whispered that Migeon had followed the young man into the forest, surprised him, and slain him in the first moment of his surprise. The exact truth could, of course, never be ascertained; but the jury gave Migeon the benefit of the doubt, considered the public provocation given by the young farmer's foolish words, and condemned the criminal only for homicide. This condemnation had affected the whole of the man's subsequent existence; not because the world thought very badly of him for what he had done, but simply because he had undergone the indelible disgrace of the *bagne*, and was henceforth a *forçat libéré*.

His wife was a quiet decent woman of thirty-five, with a face still possessing the charm of a severe kind of beauty which seemed out of place in her position in society, and would have been more valuable to a lady of rank. The peasantry do not seem to appreciate

beauty of that kind at all. What they like is a fat, round, cheerful face, with rosy cheeks, and laughing eyes. Anna Migeon was pale, and had a serious though not unpleasant expression; whilst her face had that noble outline which may be found more frequently in Southern Italy than in France. I soon discovered that she lived in a state of the most complete subjection to the authority of her husband. He exercised over her a power of will which would have been felt as a fearful tyranny if she had ever ventured to oppose the slightest resistance; but her submission was so absolute, that, on the whole, her life was not an unhappy one, though it was lonely and monotonous. Our arrival at Boisvipère was a fortunate circumstance for Migeon's wife in various ways. It enabled her to earn money by washing and cooking for us; and, above all, it gave her the blessing of a little variety, which, in such a lonely place, was almost beyond estimate. On our part, we had every reason to congratulate ourselves on having such a useful woman close at hand. She served us admirably well, and with the quiet regularity which suits the ideas and feelings of an Englishman.

XLII.

My own private servant was a tall, strong, talkative fellow named Perrin. He was recommended to me by M. de Marmorne, so I took him in blind confidence; but at first did not at all like what seemed to me the obtrusive familiarity of his manners. He had a loud

voice, too, which I did not like at all, and spoke imperfect French, so garnished with the local dialect that, at first, I had a difficulty in understanding him. I resolved to bear with his deficiencies for a while, just to see whether he would get over them, or, if not, whether he had not some good qualities which might be a compensation. On further acquaintance, the man's qualities became more evident to me, and I gradually got accustomed to his want of polish and absence of ceremony, which at last only amused me. He became a most valuable, trustworthy servant, and I found strong reason afterwards to congratulate myself on having had the patience to keep him. On his part, he became attached to me; but, of the three brothers, the one he liked or admired the most was my brother Julius. It was plain to me that he did not like Emil at all, nor did Emil like him: indeed he said to me several times that he wondered I kept on that fellow Perrin, who was much too impudent for his place. My only answer to these remarks was to laugh, and say that Perrin was a rough diamond, valuable though unpolished. To complete his portrait, I ought to add that he had a good-looking face and a manly bearing.

The only luxury I allowed myself at Boisvipère was two horses,—one for the saddle, the other to draw a two-wheeled spring-cart, which served to fetch things from the distant market town; but the latter, though trained to harness, soon got accustomed to the saddle also, and Perrin could ride him safely even on the rough forest roads.

XLIII.

The valley where the reservoir was to be made lay in our own estate, but in the depths of the forest, two miles from the chateau of Boisvipère. It was called La Creuse, and was accessible from the chateau by a bridle-road which made a round of about a mile. I rode over there every morning regularly to see the progress of the works, until, early in the month of December, they were stopped by a hard frost. The place had some picturesque charm, which was likely to be much increased by our intended sheet of water. A small stream, quite powerful enough to carry logs of wood, when swollen by the rains, ran down the valley over a rocky bed, and the valley itself was shaped something like a pair of calipers, or the colonnade before St Peter's at Rome; so that we had only to wall up the narrow space between the advancing points, to have a lake above, in which Nature herself would have done nine-tenths of the work. The stream did not require much clearing to make it what the French call *flottable*—that is, able to carry logs of wood down its whole course. All trees which had fallen across it had to be removed, and, at certain places, the rocks had to be blasted; but whilst one gang of workmen was employed upon the dam, another was gradually working down the stream, and clearing the way step by step. I never had anything to do with a piece of work that interested or amused me more. La Creuse had a charm for me

which the dreary chateau of Boisvipère lacked altogether. I went to it every day as a man goes to his garden, and became impatient to see the woods in their summer verdure reflected in the calm waters of the lake that did not yet exist.

We saw little of the De Marmornes, on our return to Boisvipère from Marseilles. Emil called upon them once or twice, and so did I; but each went separately, and only stayed to *déjeûner*. Ada seemed calm and happy. A telegram from Julius had announced his safe arrival at Port Said, and we were expecting letters every day. At last the letters came to Marmorne and Boisvipère at the same time. They contained nothing which our own imaginations could not easily have anticipated, except a lively account of his first impressions on getting a glimpse of Egypt; but similar impressions have been so often recorded by other travellers that I spare the reader the repetition of them.

Emil left for London when he had prepared the case he had on hand. I returned to England after the frost set in, a day or two after Emil, feeling rather urged to this decision by a letter from Sir Anthony, in which he made some allusion to his loneliness. Sir Anthony and I returned together to Segrave Park, where we spent an extremely quiet winter, owing to the state of my father's health. There came in this way a general lull in our family affairs. Sir Anthony had now little to interest him in life, except the expected letters from Julius, and my own accounts of what had happened at Marmorne and Boisvipère. He was delighted to hear that Julius

had become engaged to Ada de Marmorne, whose family he greatly respected; but much of his satisfaction may have been due to the hope that this engagement would bring Julius more surely back again.

XLIV.

Things might have gone on in this quiet way for the two years of my brother's absence, if my father's health had continued in the same state. He remained fairly well for about a year, but did not feel strong enough to go to Marmorne, in spite of friendly and reiterated invitations. After that, he rapidly declined, and died at last of mere weakness at Segrave Park, fifteen months after the departure of my brother Julius.

Both my father and I deeply regretted my brother's absence at that time. It is true that Emil supplied his place to the best of his ability, and especially gave my father the benefit of his advice and counsel on matters concerning his estate, the consequences of which were sufficiently visible in his will. Sir Anthony never consulted me on matters of business, as he had the very common prejudice which assumes that a studious life incapacitates men for affairs. It is useless to try to argue down a settled prejudice: but it seems to me that the lists of bankrupts which are so frequently published in the newspapers contain a very considerable proportion of tradesmen; whilst authors, artists, and men of science do somehow generally contrive to steer clear of the sand-bank of bankruptcy, although they may rarely

sail upon the deep calm golden sea of a great accumulated fortune.

When my father's will came to be read, it turned out to be perfectly in accordance with the prevailing prejudice. Segrave Park and all the Yorkshire farms were left to Julius as the eldest son. As for me, I received a sum of money in the Funds, or rather the interest of it; for the principal was so tied up that I should never be able to touch a penny of it, either for expenditure or for a change of investment.

The most curious part of the will was that relating to Emil, and it bore evidence enough of the influence acquired by him over my father during the last year of his life. The will divided the estate of Boisvipère into three lots; a big one, including the chateau and its dependencies—and two others, much smaller, and of far inferior value. The big lot, with the chateau, was for Emil; the lot including La Creuse, with the reservoir, was for me; and the third lot, near the hamlet of Les Chaumes, was for my brother Julius. I should not have felt entitled to complain of this arrangement, if it had been unaccompanied by any further advantage for Emil. The share given to me was certainly the portion of the estate which I best liked; and I might have built a small house upon it, sufficient for the needs of a bachelor in the country, as a residence during my occasional visits; but any such project was rendered impossible by a subsequent clause in the will. This clause provided, with a view to keeping the Boisvipère estate together, that if my brother Emil chose to purchase my share and

that of Julius, for certain prices fixed in the will itself, he was to have the right of doing so, even if we were unwilling to sell—a right all the more oppressive in my case that La Creuse with the stream and the reservoir would have been a possession of peculiar importance. The owner of La Creuse, by his power of floating the wood down to the Yonne, was in a position to obtain peculiar advantages from the owner of Boisvipère, as Emil had no doubt foreseen when he gave my father his not very disinterested advice. Had I been left free to fix my own terms about the sale of La Creuse, I should have fixed, supposing the resolution to sell, a much higher figure than the estimate in the will; but it is not probable that I should have wished to sell at all. Another detail of considerable importance will show how completely the will had been arranged to serve the interests of Emil, or at least so as to leave him a degree of liberty of action of which I was utterly deprived.

A sum of money equal to that which lay for me in the Funds had been left to Emil at his own absolute disposal, my little fortune being carefully tied up. This was to enable Emil to purchase the two smaller shares of Boisvipère. It was not in itself sufficient, but he had already saved several thousand pounds from his profession. With his savings, and the money left to him, he was in a position to become owner of the whole estate of Boisvipère whenever it pleased him. I requested to know his decision; and his answer, as I expected, was that he would purchase my share and that of Julius for the sums fixed in the will.

There was no necessity even to await the return of Julius from his African expedition. Emil had nothing to do but lodge the money for Julius at his banker's, and the transaction was accomplished. He handed me a cheque in place of the title-deeds for La Creuse, and so ended my brief possibility of ownership.

At the same time, Emil very courteously said that he hoped I would retain my rooms in the chateau at Boisvipère, in case I liked to visit the place occasionally. As it happened that I had a quantity of books there, and some furniture of my own, I accepted this offer provisionally. I inquired whether Emil had any intention of relinquishing his profession, to which he replied, with an air of unfeigned astonishment, most decidedly in the negative. He "should certainly never dream," he said, "of abandoning the position of a successful English lawyer for that of a moderately wealthy proprietor in France. Besides, Boisvipère would be an intolerably dull place to live at." I inquired if he intended to stay there frequently. "I shall go sometimes," he said, "to look after the woods and make them pay better; but I don't intend to throw away any money on trying to improve that old house. I shall just keep my rooms as they were; and, if you will be fraternal enough to keep yours, we shall sometimes perhaps be there together. Pray don't wait for my going, however, in case you feel inclined to stay a few days or weeks at Boisvipère at any time."

Migeon and Perrin were both kept on—Migeon as Emil's servant, Perrin as mine. My horses were both kept at Emil's expense, but still remained my property.

It was understood that they were to be used by either of us on our visits.

Some men in my situation would have quarrelled with a brother who had obviously used his influence to obtain a will peculiarly favourable to himself; but what would have been the use of quarrelling? Emil had simply acted according to his nature, which was keenly alive to his own interests, and gifted with the most subtle perception of the means by which his purposes were to be attained. Besides, he had no enmity whatever against me, and generally treated me with the politeness of a man of the world, united to a very pretty and becoming imitation of that openness and candour which one has a right to expect from a brother.

XLV.

It is quite unnecessary to trouble the reader with a minute account of the letters we received from Julius. The whole subject of African travel has been made so thoroughly familiar to the public by the writings of more celebrated explorers that the adventures of Julius Segrave are not likely to awaken any great degree of interest. The limitation of his absence to a couple of years had reduced his original scheme. His present intentions were confined to a single purpose. He was determined, if possible, to survey the southern extremity of the Albert N'yanza, which Baker had left unexplored, or at least to ascertain how far its waters extended to the south, or the south-west. This looks quite a simple piece of business when you consult a recent map of the country. You have only to go to Zanzibar, and from thence to

Ujiji, from which place you may cross to Uvira in a canoe on the Lake Tanganyika; and then, by simply striking across country about a hundred miles as the crow flies, you come upon the southern shore of the great Albert Lake, which you have only to follow westwards, and the problem is solved. All this is very nice in theory; but the practical difficulties of this simple little excursion into the African Lake District are prodigious. Even the known route from Zanzibar to Ujiji would cost Julius five months if everything went smoothly; and difficulties from sickness or from war amongst the natives, which were always nearly as much to be expected as if they were perfectly certain, might cause indefinite delays. The transit from the northern end of the Lake Tanganyika to the southern coast of the Albert N'yanza was not so long, but it was far more problematical. If Julius had not been limited as to time, I had no doubt that he would either have accomplished his purpose or left his bones in Africa; but his engagement to Ada had placed him in a position little suited for a kind of travelling of which nothing is certain except its danger. It was like taking a holiday in some active profession, with a fixed date for the return to patients or clients. Sir Henry Holland used to make long excursions in his annual holiday, and always regularly get back to London and duty at the appointed hour; but then he took care to keep within the regions of steam communication, either by land or water.

Julius had written home from Zanzibar, giving a minute account of his preparations. He certainly lost

no time, but threw himself into the interior with the ardour of a beginner in geographical exploration. We got two other letters from him which he had intrusted to caravans he met upon the road to Ujiji. After that, we had received no news of him of any authentic kind, although some disquieting rumours had appeared in the English newspapers. An English traveller had been found in a dying state, a prisoner in the hands of savages, and so weak that he was unable to utter a word. This traveller had died at the very moment when succour arrived, and had only made some unintelligible signs, whilst his captors had removed every article he possessed about his person, so that it was impossible to ascertain even the initials of his name. Unfortunately for our peace, a few words of description, given as some clue to the identification of this unfortunate traveller, answered pretty well to Julius; but the description was of the most general character, made by some one little accustomed to minutely accurate observation, and it might have been applicable to thousands of Englishmen as well as my absent brother. The long silence left our imaginations ample liberty of action, so we began to torment ourselves as most people do under the same circumstances. When I say "we," do not let it be understood that my brother Emil made himself very unhappy. He always spoke of Julius with a becoming degree of fraternal interest; but it was clear to me that he bore his brother's absence very patiently, and would certainly survive the loss of him without letting his health be undermined by his bereavement.

XLVI.

Notwithstanding Emil's determination not to abandon his profession, he certainly began to neglect it from the date of his inheritance of Boisvipère. His Continental journeys became frequent; rural tastes began to develop themselves. *Cras amet qui nunquam amavit* may be said with reference to the love of the country, as well as the love of woman. This London barrister, whose body had lived contentedly in the Temple, and whose soul had found congenial occupation in the intricacies of legal procedure, now began to aspire to less sedentary pursuits.

Monsieur de Marmorne, like most country gentlemen in his part of France, was a hardy sportsman of simple habits, who would walk far for a small result. Emil placed himself under his guidance as a sort of pupil, which seemed a very natural arrangement to M. de Marmorne, on account of his greater age and far greater familiarity with the country. In the month of June 1870, the De Marmornes were at Trouville for a few weeks; so Emil crossed the Channel to make some arrangements with the old gentleman about the ensuing season.

M. de Marmorne's feelings of suspicion or disapproval with regard to Emil had long since given way to unbounded confidence, and a disposition to make up for past distrust by the utmost degree of kindness of which one of the kindest hearts in the world could be capable.

Now that Emil was owner of Boisvipère, the old French gentleman treated him as a neighbour, began his letters to him with "*cher monsieur et voisin*," and entreated him to pass at least some months of "*la belle saison*" at Marmorne or Boisvipère, that he might see the country at its best; after which the shooting season would come in September, beginning with partridges on M. de Marmorne's low-lying farms in the plain, and continuing with the excitements of the grander forest sports until the end of winter. Few arguments were necessary to persuade Emil, who felt already the longing to see his own possessions about him which is so common to all who have recently become proprietors. Either legal business was not particularly pressing, or my brother transferred the burden of it very easily to one of his friends; for he accompanied the De Marmornes from Trouville to Marmorne. I myself received a kind invitation from the old gentleman to join them, and Emil was so good as to write to me a brief note in which he begged me not to forget that I had rooms of my own in the chateau of Boisvipère.

This is how it came to pass that Emil and I were in France at the beginning of July 1870.

XLVII.

The first few days of that particular month of July are a very remarkable time in the history of modern Europe.

They are remarkable for the general sense of tran-

quillity which prevailed on the very eve of a tremendous conflict. On the 5th of that month, the permanent head of the English Foreign Office told the new minister that in all his experience he had never known so great a lull in foreign affairs. I perfectly well remember that very 5th of July, and how we spent it. The De Marmornes had arranged a little picnic to La Creuse, consisting of ourselves, the *curé* of the village of Marmorne, and the family of a neighbouring squire. The day turned out intensely hot, but not oppressive, except that there seemed to be a want of air in the denser parts of the forest. The lake at La Creuse had been for some time completed, and was now rather a fine sheet of water, covering seventy acres, and appearing larger than it really was from the picturesque and varied character of the scenery on its shores. The trees came down to the water's edge, except where the shores were rocky and precipitous, as they were in some places, and especially near the dam. The place would have had nearly all the characteristics of lake scenery if the mountains had been loftier, and the distances more extensive. Even as it was, La Creuse had a great charm. One could believe the place any distance from the haunts of men. The dam was invisible except on going close up to it; the hills shut out the external world: so that the little valley was a miniature world by itself, with its own private roof of sky. Now and then a white cloud would float across and mirror itself in the smooth water. Now and then a hawk would hover on rapidly-vibrating wings, keenly scrutinise the land and water beneath him, and

then sail away steadily beyond the topmost branches that bounded our narrow horizon. Hardly a breath of air was stirring that day, except at intervals, when there came a faint refreshing breeze, just enough to dull the bright surface of the lake, and gently awaken the sleepy summer leaves. The only audible sounds were the murmur of the brook as it came into the lake over its stony bed, and issued from it in a little cascade, falling over the dam on the ferny rocks below; the hum of insects; and the vague, faint noises of the woods.

Our little party had all the delightful ease and mutual goodwill that characterise well-bred French people when they meet to pass a few hours in each other's society. M. de Marmorne was dressed from head to foot in white tick, his friend in yellow nankeen, and the ladies in the most summery of muslins; to all which the close black *soutane* of the priest, and his red perspiring face, made an amusing yet pathetic contrast.

The gentleman in yellow nankeen was owner of a charming estate between Boisvipère and Marmorne, including both forest and arable land, and worth about £1500 a-year. The one purpose of his life seemed to be the enjoyment of the passing hour. He served his country, it is true, in the capacity of mayor of the commune of Marmorne, in which Boisvipère was situated; but beyond this he had no other occupation, and spent his days in healthy idleness. He was plain Monsieur Didier, without the *de* or any shadow of a title; but his family had owned estates in the neighbourhood for several generations and had intermarried with the local *noblesse*,

so that his position answered pretty accurately to that of an English country squire. There was such a total absence of pretension about the man that it was impossible not to like him from the beginning. He had an honest, good-tempered face, a little too red in the cheeks and nose, from regular potations of sound Burgundy; a bald round head; and a short but very muscular body. I have not the slightest wish to imply that M. Didier ever drank enough to make himself tipsy; but the regular habits of his life involved a wonderful absorption of the juice of the grape. As we came to know him better, we perceived that he finished his bottle of *vin ordinaire* at each meal without the slightest prejudice to the finer wines that followed, of which he was an accomplished connoisseur; neither did he despise the crowning mercy of *liqueurs*. He was sixty years old already, and, with his bald head and well-shaven face, had the appearance of a very large, healthy child. The good state of his health, notwithstanding the freest possible indulgence in all the pleasures of the table, may probably be accounted for by his habit of being constantly out of doors on some pretext or another. Idle as he was intellectually, and equally indisposed to any physical exertion which could possibly be interpreted as work, he used his strong muscles willingly enough whenever there was the attraction of amusement.

M. Didier had brought his wife with him and two daughters and a son. Madame Didier was a fat woman who smiled graciously on everybody, and did not seem to think any further exertion necessary on her part; the

daughters were pretty and looked intelligent, but, like all well-bred French girls, kept provokingly silent; the son was a fine manly youth of nineteen, much taller than his father, and much more elegantly proportioned. It was easy to see that he was a great favourite of M. de Marmorne, who spoke to him with the kindly and familiar second person singular.

I may conclude this description of our little company by a few words about the *curé*. He was a simple village priest, about fifty years old, entirely absorbed in his pastoral work at Marmorne, and not at all likely to be promoted to any higher dignity. He had seen himself passed over so often that advancement of any kind was now quite beyond his hopes, and he thought no more about it, but felt himself to be just as much settled and fixed at Marmorne as the trees that grew between the presbytery and the church. He was the son of a peasant, and inherited from his ancestors that reliable bodily vigour which is the result of constant exercise. At the same time, he had some other characteristics of the class from which he sprang. He remained perfectly contented with just that limited degree of knowledge which was absolutely necessary to the exercise of his profession, and he cared no more for the interests of the modern world than did his brother when tilling the paternal fields. One remark of his will be sufficient evidence of this indifference. "All these railways and telegraphs and newspapers are very clever things, I daresay; but our forefathers did very well without them, and so might we." The complex modern civilisation, to which these

things are absolute necessities, lay quite outside of his conceptions. Still he was behind his age, rather than wanting in natural intelligence. He was not a stupid person by any means, nor were his manners bad. His sermons were very well adapted to the capacity of the peasants who heard him; and I have no doubt that he did much more good about Marmorne than some clever man would have done, after sharpening his wits in Paris. This summary portrait will be nearly complete when I add that, although decent and clean, our *curé* was incorrigibly shabby. His cassock and broad-brimmed hat looked twenty years old at least.

XLVIII.

The place chosen for our repast was a little rocky promontory that jutted out into the lake, pleasantly shaded by a group of stunted oaks, and reminding one, on a very small scale, of wooded promontories on the lakes of Scotland. Our friends were unanimous in admiring the beauty of La Creuse, with its new embellishment of water. M. Didier said that, if it were his, he would build a real Swiss chalet, as a fishing-lodge, and come to the lake to fish; to which his son added that there ought to be a sailing-boat, like those excellent ones they build at Asnières, with which a solitary amateur can tack about at his pleasure, in a very small space. We all agreed that in winter it would be a delightful place for skating. I, for my part, had my own secret regrets. This was the only part of the estate which had

any great attraction or charm for me; and now, after so nearly being mine, it had passed into Emil's hands irrevocably. I think Emil perceived something of this in the expression of my countenance, for he said, with much kindness of manner: "It is you, Adolphus, who ought to have a chalet here, as I know you like the place. There is plenty of wood close at hand, and a couple of carpenters would make one in a month or two quite big enough for a bachelor. Not that I want you to give up your rooms at Boisvipère; but the chalet would be nice to come to sometimes, would it not?" Small matters often have a decisive influence on our lives. That notion of M. Didier's about the chalet led to important consequences.

I began to be a little anxious about Ada. When *déjeûner* was over, and we were walking about the shore of the lake, I took the opportunity of talking of what most interested her. When I spoke of Julius, and his return for the eve of St Elizabeth, only four months from us then, she smiled faintly and sadly, and, as it seemed to me, incredulously. "He will be sure to return at the appointed time," I said; but she repeated the same incredulous smile, and said, "I hope so!" in a tone of voice as nearly hopeless as it could be without absolute despair.

"There is no reason as yet," I went on, "for any special anxiety about Julius. He is probably on his way to the coast. He could not send letters faster than he is coming back himself; for he is travelling, no doubt, with the usual speed of the caravans. It is not like trav-

elling in Europe, where we send letters and telegrams as *avant-couriers*. We shall probably not hear of him till he reaches Aden; but we may expect a telegram from Aden in the beginning of October, or perhaps a little earlier."

To this Ada returned no answer whatever. I began to feel that sense of difficulty which so often seizes the masculine mind in regard to the conduct and feelings of women. The idea suggested itself to me that she was displeased by the long silence of Julius, and, with feminine perversity, would not take into account the impossibility of postal communication in the regions which he was traversing. "He has probably had no opportunity of sending letters," I said, "since the last which we received, and which were written near Ujiji."

"Perhaps he may have had no opportunity," she answered, after a pause, with the air of a woman who is only half satisfied with the conduct of her lover.

At that time, let me say frankly in this place, I entirely misunderstood the condition of Ada's feelings. I thought her unjust to Julius, and this idea displeased me. Fraternal affection is my excuse, and the only possible excuse, for what may seem the cruelty of my next remark. "We must remember," I said, "that the journey which Julius has undertaken is dangerous, and that he may have been detained by illness in some place beyond the limits of communication. Dr Livingstone has not been heard of for some time."

An expression of pain crossed Ada's countenance like a dark shadow, but she did not utter one word. She

only walked faster, as if anxious to go somewhere or escape from her own reflections. I then clumsily attempted to attenuate the effect of what I had said.

"We have no reason to conclude that he is seriously ill; but it is quite possible that he may be detained somewhere by the common indispositions of African travel. All travellers in those regions go through repeated attacks of fever. However, Julius has a strong constitution, and took plenty of quinine with him. All I want to suggest is, that we must not blame him because we don't get letters."

"I have expressed no blame."

"Certainly you have expressed no blame directly: but I thought you did not seem quite pleased with Julius; and yet you encouraged him in his enterprise."

"I did not wish to be a drag upon him."

This was the whole of what she had to say about Julius. It is quite true that she said nothing unkind or unjust, and that whatever unkindness there was had been rather on my side; yet I felt a general sense of unsatisfactoriness which perplexed and rather provoked me. Could she not have talked about him rather more heartily? I tried to turn the conversation into another channel, but with no better success. Ada seemed reserved with me, though she had taken her share in the lively talk at *déjeûner*.

I found an opportunity of speaking to Mademoiselle Abeille as we were walking along the path in the wood, by the water-side. I asked, in English, what she thought of Ada and of the way she bore the absence of Julius.

"At first she has been very brave," Abeille answered, in her curious English; "but since some weeks she has less of empire on herself."

It seemed to me, on the contrary, that Ada either had great command of herself, or else she was really cool about Julius; and I said so.

"After the departure of Monsieur Jules," Abeille continued, "Ada has maintained her gaiety during one or two months; but since that time she is become gradually more sad, and now, I fear well, she has not more hope. My father has much anxiety, and so have I. The reason he went to Trouville was to ameliorate the mental state of Ada, because he fears lest she should fall into a malady of languor. But now I remark no amelioration."

"Will not she talk about Julius to you any more freely and heartily than she does to me?"

"Alas, no! If only she would speak of him, and believe that he lives, and hope his return, we should not have so many fears: but that which makes us fear is that since many weeks she avoids the subject with care; and now we ourselves are obliged to avoid it also."

"I wish we might hear from Julius; but there is no probability of that."

"Oh, if a letter might come, Ada would be again the Ada of other time! But now my sister is no more what she was, and I feel sad for her, and me, and us all. My poor father is much affected of it."

Here our little conversation came to an end; for M. Didier, overflowing with animal spirits and general en-

joyment of life, overtook us at a turn of the forest path. The only impediment to the perfection of his happiness appeared to be the heat; for his straw hat was in one of his hands, and the other was occupied in wiping the perspiration from his broad hairless face and massive baby-like head.

"This is delightful!" he said, with an air of perfect conviction. "It is like a little Switzerland. Here is water, and here are rocks and trees as many as you like, and, to make the illusion quite complete, here is an English tourist; for, in Switzerland, no scene can be found, you know, without at least one English tourist."

"Yes; but where are your snowy Alps, and your big expensive hotels?"

"As for the Alps, I can imagine them; and as for the hotels, I can do without them, especially after that excellent *déjeûner*. But we want a chalet, you know, to complete the charm of this charming place; and as Monsieur your brother won't let me build one, but says you are to do it, or he will do it for you, let me at least have the pleasure of helping you to choose the place. I know every inch of this ground; for I have shot over it many a time with our good friend M. de Marmorne, when you were living in England. Let us wait a minute for him: he is coming already behind us with Monsieur your brother." Here M. Didier sat down in the grass, like a man overpowered by physical exertion.

M. de Marmorne came in a few minutes; and I caught a sight of his face before it was lighted up by the endeavour to make himself agreeable. There was an air

of dejection upon it which pained me exceedingly. I thought he looked older, sallower, more wrinkled; the dark, bushy eyebrows seemed contracted; the mouth compressed, and drawn down at the corners; the brown skin yellower and less healthy. As soon as he saw us, he banished, by a sudden and successful effort, every appearance of sadness from his countenance, which instantly resumed the charming expression of combined intelligence and kindness that made every one forget its plainness.

He entered with an appearance of hearty interest into the talk about the chalet. Abeille suggested that, as they possessed at Marmorne half-a-dozen little model chalets, purchased during a tour in Switzerland, the most suitable of them should be selected, and given to the carpenters to copy. M. Didier recommended an ingenious man, who lived in his own village, and might be trusted to carry out the design to a satisfactory completion. Emil offered the wood, of which there was a great deal at Marmorne, from the clearing which had been made for the lake. The site was selected by M. Didier, and approved by all of us. It was on a rocky ground, about thirty feet above the level of the water, and not at all unlike a bit of real Swiss foreground, as M. Didier said. The view was limited, but charmingly secluded. The lake, and the wooded steeps surrounding it, would appear to belong completely to the little chalet; and the landscape from its windows would be incomparably more agreeable than the area of desolate land, and the imprisoning ring of trees that surrounded

the house at Boisvipère. It would be a delightful place for study—just the place to settle in for a few weeks with books and papers, in perfect independence of interruption. I began to look forward to it with almost a boyish eagerness of anticipation.

"What is the chalet to be called?" Abeille asked, gaily. "It must have a name of some sort. Let us decide about its name."

"I have it," said M. Didier, and then he pronounced something which certainly was not French; but what other language it might be, I could not at first discover. At last, when he had repeated the word at least half-a-dozen times, I made out something like "Good seat."

"It is compounded of two English words, 'good' and 'sight,' said M. Didier. 'Good' means *bonne*, and 'sight'" (he pronounced it *seat*) "means *vue*. Goodsight, *bonne vue*, *bellevue*, you understand?"

It was not of the least use for me to explain that good sight meant the healthy action of the visual organs, and had nothing to do with the beauty of a situation. M. Didier's proposition was accepted by all our French friends as most appropriate. Even Abeille, with all her knowledge of our language, did not perceive the absurdity of it. Emil smiled, but said nothing. M. Didier felt proud of having named the place. Madame Didier was evidently gratified by the linguistic accomplishments of her husband; the rest of the company admired him; and the place is called Goodsight to this day.

XLIX.

The chalet was begun the next week with great energy, as Emil wanted to see it finished before his return to England.

Then we began to be anxious about political news, and the arrival of the country postman was looked forward to every day with feverish expectation. The increasing excitement of the succeeding days began to make the time of our peaceful picnic to La Creuse seem strangely remote from us. We rode to Marmorne every day to talk over the prospects of Europe with the old gentleman, as our personal tranquillity and solitude at Boisvipère became almost irksome in the gathering anxiety of the nation. Besides, our own wish to talk to somebody, another reason, drew us frequently to Marmorne. The old gentleman had a great longing to learn what was in the English newspapers; and as we had two or three of these, we carried them to him almost every day, which imposed upon poor Mademoiselle Abeille a great deal of heavy labour in translating.

On the 16th of July, our rural peace and felicity were shaken by the declaration of war. I observed to Emil that I thought we should be better placed, under the circumstances, in England; but, to my surprise, he did not seem in the least disposed to quit Boisvipère. He said there were still many things to look after; that the chalet was begun, and must be finished; and that, although he intended to make no important alteration at

the chateau, it still needed some repairs, which could not well be executed in his absence.

Things went on in this way for a space of many weeks, which seemed interminably long, owing to the public anxiety of the time. Paris was invested on the 21st of September, and after that we had no regular news from the beleaguered city. We had also our own private anxiety about Julius, from whom came no news whatever; and we had no idea of his situation, beyond our knowledge of his original intentions, which might have been modified by circumstances. We spoke of him very seldom, and the apparent apathy of Ada de Marmorne astonished me more and more. I alluded at rare intervals to his return in her presence, and sometimes purposely arranged my remarks so as to involve her necessarily in the conversation. When she could not avoid it, she answered with extreme brevity, and like a person disinterested in the subject. When it was possible to keep silence, she did so. Her taciturnity extended to everything else. Even the strain of prolonged anxiety and excitement caused by the successive German victories drew from her few expressions either of sorrow or alarm.

Emil said to me one day in the beginning of October, "I wish you would not talk to Ada about Julius. Don't you see that it hurts her, although she says very little. I have noticed that you do it sometimes to rouse her, and, no doubt, you mean to do her good; but I feel certain that it is a mistake. She will only be the worse for it afterwards. The best kindness in a case of this

sort is to divert the attention, if possible, to other subjects."

After this, I began to pay more attention to Emil's own way of treating Ada. By observing them on several occasions together, I certainly discovered one thing, which was his decided superiority to myself in the art of being agreeable. Ada listened to him more willingly than to me; and though she had little to say in answer, he so managed matters, that his talk had all the appearance of being only a fair share in a conversation. He never on any occasion obtruded himself, as if he had any projects of his own to advance, or any recollection of his former suit. I noticed that M. de Marmorne was watching him very narrowly, but Emil did not seem to perceive it. He conducted himself throughout with perfect ease, and the grace of manner which belongs only to the most accomplished gentlemen.

As we had already stayed so long, it was decided that we should remain in France at any rate until the feast of St Elizabeth, the 19th of November, that being the date fixed for the return of my brother Julius. Notwithstanding the war fever, the chalet at La Creuse had been finished by the end of August, with the exception of some interior fittings, not yet quite complete. I had kept my rooms at Boisvipère; and as the season was now advancing, there seemed to be no probability that I should make any use of the chalet that year.

L.

In the month of October, a very important event occurred. We were at *déjeûner* in the house at Marmorne, trying to be cheerful, and not succeeding very brilliantly, when the postman arrived. He came straight into the dining-room, as he often did, knowing himself to be a privileged person, and being always very willing to accept a glass of wine, more likely to be offered to him in that room than in any other; so that his blue blouse, brass badge, and glazed cap with a red rim, often made a variety for us during a few minutes, and a variety of great interest in an isolated country-house. This time he fumbled rather long in his great leathern bag, and finally produced a blue, rather official-looking envelope.

"C'est un télégramme pour Mademoiselle," he remarked, and laid the envelope down on the table, close to Ada's plate.

We were all immediately interested in this — all of us except the person to whom the telegram was addressed.

Ada glanced at the envelope, and went on eating without opening it. There was not the slightest sign of any interest or curiosity on her face. She did not even thank the postman, or speak to him—which, considering the familiar kindliness of French ways, was in itself strangely apathetic. The postman had been on his beat for ten years, and knew everybody in the house quite well enough to allow him freedom of speech.

"Mademoiselle does not inform herself of the contents of her despatch? If an answer were necessary, I would wait a few minutes to take it back with me."

Ada still left the envelope untouched, and said "Merci," in the tone which conveys that one has no need for the service which is offered.

The postman had letters for us and for M. de Marmorne. He delivered them, got his glass of wine, and resumed his toil of perpetual pedestrianism, wondering no doubt what could be the matter with Mademoiselle.

Monsieur de Marmorne left his own letters untouched. "Ada," he said, "I am very curious to know the contents of your telegram." She handed it to him at once. He tore the envelope off, glanced over the despatch, and exclaimed, "C'est de Monsieur Jules! Il va bien! Il revient!" and then he read the precious scrap of paper aloud—

"Arrivé à Aden bien portant mais fatigué. Domestiques Anglais morts tous deux de fièvre. Suis allé au lac Albert. À bientôt."

Our eyes had been turned on M. de Marmorne's brown plain face whilst he was reading, but they reverted at once to Ada. An indescribable dread took possession of me, as under this strong test I witnessed her unnatural calm. My heart beat loudly, and I could scarcely keep my seat. Ada de Marmorne looked at her father with an expression of countenance implying polite interest in the news he had just communicated. "Monsieur Jules is coming back," she said. "I am glad to hear it: he has been absent a long time, and

those African journeys are always considered dangerous." Then she went on eating her *bœuf à la mode.*

Our joy in the news of Julius was lost in consternation at Ada's inexplicable apathy. Her father looked at me, and his look I shall never forget. The same wretched expression that I had noticed at La Creuse, when he had thought himself unobserved, now shaped his plain features without any veil of disguise. Then he looked at Ada with a depth of sorrow in his face that needed no help of language.

Abeille burst into tears.

Emil looked perplexed and displeased rather than grieved. His expression was exactly what I have seen it when a vexatious obstacle had occurred to him in the furtherance of his professional plans—when a witness had turned up at the wrong time, for instance, to the damage and embarrassment of a case that was going on smoothly.

LI.

Hardly anything more was said that day at *déjeûner.* My brother's return, which would have been such a delight to us if Ada had remained herself, now became a subject of positive apprehension. For him I dreaded the shock of an unspeakable disappointment; for her—I dared not imagine what: but it became more fearfully plain to me every hour that, if the sight of him and the sound of his voice did not bring back mental health, she would slowly pass into a condition worse than death.

Her father took me into his private cabinet behind

the museum, and talked about her without reserve. It was a relief that he needed, and I listened; for I could at least listen, though I could do nothing else just then either for him or for Ada.

The tears came into his eyes as he spoke, and slowly coursed unchecked, unheeded, down his cheek. "I have seen Ada's mental condition coming on gradually," he said, "for more than a year. I have done all I could to relieve her. Of course I have consulted physicians. An eminent physician, an old friend of mine, saw her every day at Trouville, and observed her almost from hour to hour. The case was not new to him. He told me that he had known two or three similar instances when married women, wives of sea-captains who undertook very long voyages, had gradually passed from anxiety to apathy, the very power of feeling having become dulled and deadened by its own excess."

"Did the physician suggest any course of treatment, sir? Is there anything you or we can do?"

"He said there was little to be done till we had some news of your brother, and that he awaited its arrival with anxiety, in order to judge of Ada's condition from her reception of it."

"Did he enter into any explanation? did he go into particulars from which we can get any light for our guidance?"

"He told me to be present if possible when Ada received the news, to watch her manner narrowly, and see if I could detect any warmth of emotion. He told me to notice if she understood the news."

"She understood it perfectly."

"Yes, indeed, and that is just the most difficult part of the case. We can excite no emotion by mere explanation; we have not that resource: for she has understood the telegram as well as we have, and yet she feels nothing. Even the events of this unhappy war have never roused her."

"It is possible that the anxiety caused by the war may have aggravated her case."

"Yes, that is possible; but she seems to be past all anxiety now."

"Is there anything, sir, that we can do for her—anything that the physician recommended?"

"He said we were to talk about your brother frequently, and try to interest her about him. But there is a difficulty for me in this, because I don't know very much of Monsieur Jules: I have seen but little of him, and have never known him in his youth. Now I have a reason for asking you to come into this little cabinet today. I want your help. It has occurred to me that you, who know so much more about Monsieur Jules than I do, might perhaps succeed better with Ada by talking to her about his early life in England, by describing Segrave Park, and awakening some interest in the country and people there. Ah! if poor Ada were her former self, what a willing and interested listener you would have; she whose mind was so open, who liked so well to hear everything that could enlarge her views! But, whatever may be the result, I beg of you to make the experiment. Pray remain here at Marmorne; and, out

of pity to an old man as well as from kindness to your brother, just make it your business for a few days or weeks to talk to my daughter as I have suggested. You will have a dull life of it here, but perhaps not more dull than your existence up at Boisvipère. You shall have a study of your own close to your bedroom, and pursue your own occupations at your own hours. I cannot be with you much, on account of my company of *francs-tireurs*."

Either from some latent distrust, or because M. de Marmorne thought one of us enough, Emil was not invited. Our host simply remarked that he hoped to see "his neighbour of Boisvipère" often at Marmorne, and there was something in the expression used which implied that Emil's proper place was his own house.

The reader may have noticed an expression which referred to M. de Marmorne's military occupations. Against the advice of his neighbour, M. Didier, he had formed a company of free-shooters. The lands of Marmorne, Boisvipère, and other neighbouring localities, produced the raw material for guerilla riflemen in the greatest perfection. Almost every man in the country could shoot; and the number of rustics with very small means who took out the Government licence to carry a gun, was evidence that shooting was somehow a profitable occupation. The plain truth is that these regions, like all lands in the immediate neighbourhood of the great forests, were infested with poachers; and the keepers, also very numerous, were equally skilful in the use of firearms, having frequent opportunities for prac-

tice, both at large and small game. Keepers and poachers were all united together in M. de Marmorne's little body of riflemen. In every French locality, however out of the way, there are sure to be plenty of old soldiers; and some of these, past the age for service with the *vieux garçons*, took arms again quite willingly under "*Notre Monsieur*," as our friend of Marmorne was called by all the common people.

This little body of free-shooters had a title of its own, like many other hastily-organised corps in the Franco-German war. The most lugubrious of those titles, that I remember, was, "Les Francs-tireurs de la Mort;" and their sombre uniform, with its death-emblems, was in keeping therewith. M. de Marmorne called his men by a more cheerful designation: "The Children of the Forest" ("Les Enfants de la Forêt"). Their uniform was green, too simple for any embroidery, and relieved only by a braid of a green darker than the cloth itself; but, as there was no embroidery on the uniform, the badge of the corps was worn in a natural state. Every man bore a sprig of real oak in his cap; and there were plenty of oaks about Marmorne for the constant renewal of this ornament. Nothing could have pleased the men better, for nothing could have more directly reminded them of their native land.

LII.

Emil seemed rather surprised when he learned that I was to stay at Marmorne. I did not tell him the

reason, having an instinctive feeling that it would not be agreeable to him.

The same much-walking rural postman served both Marmorne and Boisvipère, so that I got my letters and newspapers directly; and this deprived Emil of his main excuse for coming frequently to Marmorne, as I had all the English news, and could keep poor Mademoiselle Abeille in full employment as translator to her father. She had become quite clever at this business now, and turned English into French with a rapidity which excited my admiration. I do not think she would have been quite so clever in turning French into English. We talked English together, and I was requested to correct her faults, but did it most unwillingly, as I liked to hear her curious turns of our language, which no English person would have used or could have invented, and yet which were often entirely unassailable by mere grammatical criticism. She had now become familiar enough with our language to use it in speaking seriously, which is a great step; and she would talk to me in English about her sister. This very soon established a degree of intimacy between Abeille and myself which could scarcely have been brought about by any other cause.

Being now established in the house at Marmorne, I had constant opportunities for observing Ada. She looked much older than when I first knew her, two years before; but she did not appear to suffer in physical health. Even her beauty remained to her almost in its perfection; but she had no longer the charm of intelli-

gent expression. Her air and manner were now simply lady-like—no more. She had the appearance of a lady of rank, living amongst people with whom she was not intimate, in dignified reserve. All my efforts to break down the barrier of this chilling reserve were for a long time utterly unavailing. I tried everything that a gentleman could permit himself; but Ada, who once was a combination of strength with sensitiveness, now retained the first without the second of these qualities.

One day it occurred to me that if I were to read to her the old ballad, from the "Livre des Cent Ballades," which she had quoted to me before Julius left, it might possibly recall her former state of mind, at least for an instant, by the mere association of ideas. I knew where the manuscript was kept—in a little ivory cabinet of which she had the key. The cabinet was in the drawing-room where we sat. I begged her to lend me the manuscript. She went to the cabinet, opened it deliberately, and handed me the volume without a word. All I remembered was the refrain of the ballad she had read to me:—

> "Que vaillant fusse en toute place
> Et que ma Dame le vouloit."

After seeking some time, I hit upon it, and read the whole ballad aloud. Here is the first stanza:—

> "Adonc crut en moy la pensée
> D'estre plaisant et gracieux
> Et de faire que renommée
> Fust bonne de moy en tous lieux:
> Car bien souvent l'amoureux dieux

Me disoit que trop bien devoie
Estre bon, puisque je servoie
Celle qui toutes autres passe
De tous les biens dont dame a grâce,
Et que faire me convenoit
Que vaillant fusse en toute place,
Et que ma Dame le vouloit."

When I came to the refrain, which I knew by heart, my eyes were free to watch the effect on Ada. There *was* an effect—a just perceptible flush of colour, a convulsive movement of the hand. I felt encouraged, but said nothing, reading the little poem to the end. Ada's attention was evidently attracted, especially by the recurrence of the refrain :—

"Et que ma Dame le vouloit."

Then I remembered another of those noble ballads which she had read to me two years before. I read all the three quaint, high-spirited stanzas. Here is the last of them :—

"Chante, dance, joustes, tournoyes,
De bien faire ne soies coy;
Et s'en battaille te trouvoies
Lez le preux, tien te près de soy:
Se celui passe, je t'ottroy
De vaillance li haulx renoms,
Mais qu'ainsi toutes les saisons
Maintiengnes ceste acoustumance;
S'en assault viens, devant te lance,
En mine, en eschielle, en tous lieux
Où proesce les bons avance:
Ta Dame t'en aimera mieux."

NOTE.—See last page for a translation of the above stanzas.

The old poet's verse, so full of gaiety and courage, rang like the sound of a trumpet. Ada was roused at last. Her eyes flashed, her colour heightened; but, instead of making the application to Julius, as I had hoped, she seemed to think only of the war that was raging so near us, and of the brave men who died for France, forgetting that she herself had applied the very same stanza to my brother just before his departure.

"There may be bravery too," I said, "in winning the fame of a traveller by contending against the difficulties of an inhospitable country and a deadly climate: and the traveller usually needs one great quality in a higher degree than the soldier—namely, self-reliance. The soldier lives and acts in public, and even the ablest generals are surrounded by capable officers whose advice they seek in frequent councils of war; but the traveller, in emergencies not less serious for him, is usually surrounded only by simple-minded savages, who can give him neither moral nor intellectual help, and he has to take counsel with himself alone. If stricken down by accident or disease, he has the dreadful, ever-present anxiety about the failure of his own powers, when nobody is able to take his place. If he dies, his far-distant kindred and friends may never know where he is buried; if he lives, and overcomes all the dangers and difficulties in his path, they will judge of them only by his own account of them, and probably either underestimate them from sheer lack of imagination to conceive of what they themselves have never experienced, or else believe that he has exaggerated them to magnify his

own prowess. Worse than all," I added, looking hard at Ada, and putting a tone of severe significance into my voice, "the traveller in savage countries has not, like the soldier with his regiment, the great solace of frequent communication by letter with those he has left behind. During his long compulsory silence, their feelings may gradually cool; and when he comes back hurriedly, leaving his work half accomplished in order to keep an appointment made with one whom he loved better than his own fame, *he may find nothing but the ashes of her love.*"

Here I paused to watch the effect of my words. Ada's face was troubled, and began to wear an expression of pain which made me half repent of what I had said. She looked like a person recovering from unconsciousness, and trying, with great difficulty and a distressing sense of incapacity, to gather up and piece together again the broken fragments of her ideas. Few recollections are more painful to me than that of her beautiful face, lighted from without by the declining autumnal sun, and so imperfectly lighted from within!

At last she turned to me and said, "Will your brother be here for the Feast of St Elizabeth?"

I had already minutely calculated the possibilities of his return, and had arrived at the conclusion that, if nothing occurred to hinder him on the way, he would arrive at Marmorne by the time agreed upon. I therefore answered, "Certainly he will;" and then added, being no longer able to restrain the utterance of a bitter truth, "but I dread his coming more than I can tell."

Ada looked at me inquiringly, as if she could not quite understand what I had just said.

"I dread his coming," I went on boldly, "because I know by his return that he loves you still, with the constancy of his firm and manly nature. He is coming back worn with travel, more weakened perhaps in health than the laconic telegram told us, but still sustained with a great, inspiriting hope; and all that I can foresee for him is the most terrible of all the disappointments that a man can have to endure. He has cut short his enterprise, probably sacrificed his possibilities of success and fame, and for what? To find the corpse of a love that is dead!"

Ada looked at me sadly, as a deer looks at the hunter who has wounded her. "What can I do?" she said at last. "I have waited his coming long. He went away long ago, ever so long ago; but he will be here on St Elizabeth's Day, early in the morning!"

This was all she said: but it proved one thing; it proved that the chord of memory had been touched in the right place, since she had remembered that detail about my brother's departure. When he quitted Marmorne, it was in the dark November morning; and she had made him promise that he would return in time for the morning of St Elizabeth's Day, two years after their separation. I considered, therefore, that although Ada had said very little, and had not been nearly so much moved by our conversation, or rather by my discourse, as I myself had been, there were still reasons for rejoicing, and that all might yet be well if Julius could

keep his appointment. M. de Marmorne shared these hopes, and we now anxiously waited my brother's return. As for Ada, she still remained, to all outward appearance, in precisely the same condition.

LIII.

The 19th of November was now rapidly approaching, but we had no further news of Julius. This did not alarm us as much as it might have done in time of peace, for intercourse was already much interrupted by the German occupation. Letters from England took about a fortnight to reach us; and as the Germans got farther and farther south, there was every probability that we should be totally surrounded by them, after which we might be thankful if they permitted us to receive any letters or telegrams at all. Orleans had been occupied on the 11th of October. Metz capitulated on the 27th of the same month, setting free a large German force to advance in our own direction.

The first fortnight in November had not quite expired, when the postman announced that he had neither letters nor newspapers, and that we could now expect only correspondence from the immediate locality. A body of Prussians had been detached from the German army of the Loire, and had interrupted the communication between Marmorne and the south of France; whilst, in the north, they stood thick as the pine-trees in the Black Forest. All the region about Marmorne and Boisvipère had as yet remained entirely unvisited

by them, but we were not likely to remain long in our retreat without a sight of some German uniform.

About the 17th and 18th of November we became grievously anxious about Ada. We felt sure that Julius would return at last, but not by any means so sure that he would be able to return by the time fixed. Supposing him to be by this time at Marseilles, he might certainly get to Lyons; but either the Prussians, the Garibaldians, or the French held the Paris and Lyons railway in the departments of Saône-et-Loire and the Côte d'Or, and even the common roads were occupied by one or other of the contending armies. We were therefore fully prepared for some vexatious delay, —all of us except Ada; and it was the absolute impossibility of preparing *her* that filled our minds with anxiety. I had succeeded—perhaps only too well—in reviving within her mind the recollection of St Elizabeth's Day and the association of ideas connected with it; but Ada's mental state had become such that it was beyond the power of any human adviser to give her a balanced and rational degree of hope, fully prepared for a possible disappointment. My brother's return by the time fixed had become for her a matter of religious faith. She counted upon it absolutely; and now, if anything were to occur to prevent it, we could not look forward without apprehension to the probable effects upon her already enfeebled intellect.

LIV.

At length came the eve of St Elizabeth, and we had not a word of news about my absent brother.

Our situation had become one of the most anxious that it is possible to imagine. The tract of hill country in which Marmorne and Boisvipère were situated was now virtually surrounded by the enemy's troops. They did not, it is true, hem us in quite as rigorously as they hemmed in the Parisians; but they were constantly passing along the great roads to the south and west of us, whilst the north and east were permanently occupied by them. We were totally deprived of any reliable news. A severe German censorship was established in the nearest town. Letters and newspapers were kept back, or allowed to come on after endless delay. Our own correspondence with the outside world was opened and read by a German official, so we had got out of the habit of writing letters; and as for the telegraph, the wires had been cut, and the posts had been burned for firewood.

Our sense of the tightening ring of warfare that closed around us was, however, hitherto purely mental. We had not *seen* a single German soldier. The invading army had been able to execute all its movements without making use of our narrow and hilly forest roads. It was possible for an imaginative person to indulge the dream that we were in perfect peace, and to sing to himself the forest song in "As You Like It:"—

"Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather."

It was possible also for some person whose imaginative powers were either naturally weak, or else had become enfeebled by some special cause, to have some difficulty in realising our true position, and to believe himself in some impregnable, inviolable land, high above human contentions. M. de Marmorne had an old housekeeper, who, with the familiarity which French domestics acquire in course of time, used to amuse us by declaring that she did not much believe in the Prussians. "Where are they," she said, "these Prussians? I should like to *see* them. I have heard a great deal of talk about them, and now I should like to *see* them. I am not afraid of them, not I; and if ever they come here, *I'll* receive them as they deserve!" On this she would clench her fists and look so formidable, that the Red Prince himself would have been afraid of her. This only amused us, but Ada saddened us by a strange imperfection in her way of understanding things. She knew perfectly well that there was a war; she knew as well as we did that the German armies were on the whole successful; but, although aware of what was going forward in a broadly general way, she seemed utterly incapable of realising matters as they actually stood and as they affected ourselves. For example, during the three days that preceded the Feast of St Elizabeth, she was constantly expecting a telegram; and we found it utterly useless to explain to her that the wires were cut

by the enemy, "Yes, I daresay," she would answer, "some wires may be cut, but others will be preserved, and a telegram might come round to us from another part of France." This shows, as well as anything I could mention, the peculiar state of mind into which she had gradually glided. Nobody could affirm that she was insane; yet a sort of veil existed between her and the facts of life, so that she saw nothing with perfect clearness, and she lived as in a waking dream.

On the eve of St Elizabeth, M. de Marmorne, Abeille, and I were painfully anxious about the consequences to Ada if Julius did not arrive within the next twenty-four hours. We had all of us, even yet, some vague hope that he would come; we felt convinced that nothing but some absolutely insurmountable impediment could prevent him. Emil had not been to Marmorne for a fortnight; and we now learned, rather to our surprise, that he had gone to Dijon in quest of information. Ada was the only happy person in the house, for the vague dream of her present existence was near its most hopeful hour. My brother's return was indeed more than a matter of hope for her: it had become an article of faith. I had succeeded in delivering her from the chill of a death-like apathy; but now the time had come for me to feel frightened at the work that I had done. Apathy would have been a safeguard: it was an anæsthetic, like ice. With the protection of such a state, poor Ada would scarcely have noted in the calendar the return of St Elizabeth's Day; or, if she had noted it, there would have been no strain or intensity of expectation.

Now that I had called back to her mind the sentiment of trust by the power of former associations, I felt the burden of a terrible responsibility. "If Julius does not arrive here before to-morrow night," I said to myself, "Ada will lose her senses."

LV.

The night came without any sign of Julius, and Ada tortured us by a degree of cheerfulness such as she had not exhibited for months. Before we separated, she said to M. de Marmorne, "Papa, let us all be in the dining-room early to-morrow morning, just as we were when he went away, and I will boil the eggs myself as I did then, and he will come to breakfast. You must promise me this, papa, and so must you, Monsieur Adolphe; and then it will be as it was, except that, instead of going away and leaving us for so long, he will not go away any more." M. de Marmorne gave me a look of extreme pain, and then answered in a tone which he tried to make hopeful, but could not, "I promise thee, my daughter." As for me, I promised too, not knowing how to tell her that Julius might not come, and that it would be time enough to welcome him when he arrived.

We met in the *salle-à-manger* at half-past four o'clock in the morning. I at once observed that Ada wore exactly the same plain dress she had worn two years before, and the same white cap, or one just like it. She did exactly the same things, too, like an actor going through a part he has played before. There seemed not

to be the slightest shadow of doubt in her mind about his coming. "It is not *quite* as it was two years ago, you see, Monsieur Adolphe," she said, turning to me cheerfully; "for then there were only three bowls upon the table, and now there are four. That is because I was too sad then to take any *café au lait;* but I shall take it to-day, and not be alone. I have put myself a *petit pain* too, as you see, and there are eight eggs instead of six. I have arranged it all myself, for I would not let Gustine or Toinette know. Jean sleeps over the stable, and he will hear the horse of Monsieur Jules when he arrives." Then she took out her watch, "It is time to boil the eggs now: he will be here in a few minutes."

I shall remember the boiling of those eggs as long as I live; the pan on the red embers from which last night's ashes had been raked away; the bubbling, steaming water; the eggs lying in it as in a nest, but agitated by the rising steam and jolting against each other. "Messieurs the English like their eggs boiled longer than we do: these four are for papa and me, the other four are for you and Monsieur your brother." She said this with that curious formality which often characterises French people, even when they speak of those they love.

What would she do next? Would she merely wait and wait till the broad daylight came to dissipate her illusion?

At the very moment when M. de Marmorne and I were painfully wondering, Ada's delicate and sensitive ear caught a sound in the distance. "He is coming!" she said; "I hear the hoofs of his horse in the forest!"

She went to the window and opened it. There was

no wind, and through the dark air of the early morning a faint sound came to us as if two horsemen, or perhaps more, were riding along the forest road in the direction of the house of Marmorne.

"You hear!" said Ada; "I knew he would be in time! He will have left his luggage behind, to come more quickly on horseback." M. de Marmorne looked at me strangely. At last he said, "My daughter, you will take cold, let me close the window." Then he led me out into the courtyard, and said in a low voice, "I wish it were possible to get Ada out of the way. It is not Monsieur Jules who is coming. Listen to the step of those horses."

We listened silently for a few seconds. The sound of hoofs became louder and nearer. "Those are not horses hired at an inn," the old gentleman resumed; "they have the cavalry *pas*."

It was perfectly true. The step which had been a trot now subsided into a walk: but it was the regular, firm walk of the cavalry, which carries the rider well over the ground; whereas when an untrained horse passes from trotting to walking, he goes listlessly, and thinks he has a right to take it easy. The horsemen were now out of the wood, and coming straight in the direction of the chateau. M. de Marmorne went inside, no doubt to get Ada out of the way; in which I did not expect him to be successful. As for me, I remained out, partly from curiosity to see who the horsemen were, and partly because I felt painfully embarrassed in the presence of Ada.

The steady tramp of hoofs came with a dull but very audible sound on the gravel of the avenue. The courtyard of Marmorne was paved, and the pavement extended fifty yards into the avenue itself. When the hoofs struck the stones, I felt that indescribable thrill of emotion which electrifies every one who hears for the first time the close approach of the enemy. A minute later, the old courtyard rang with the clatter of three war-horses.

It was so dark that I did not see the riders; but M. de Marmorne came to the door with a lamp in his hand, and the light of it flashed upon them. They were Prussian Uhlans. One of them rode forwards towards M. de Marmorne, revolver in hand, and said in a loud voice, and with a tremendously strong Teutonic accent, "We want breakfast for ourselves and fodder for our horses. You've no free-shooters in this house, have you? If any one harms us he will suffer for it, and so will you. Show us the stable."

M. de Marmorne led the way to the stable, and I immediately joined him. The process of feeding the horses was simple in the extreme. The soldiers removed the head-gear from the animals, emptied a corn-bin on the floor, and left them to regale themselves at will. They appeared to enjoy this wastefulness as an act of authority, but did not otherwise make themselves disagreeable.

We went back to the house. M. de Marmorne had not been able to get Ada out of the way. There she stood in the dining-room, and met us with a pale, set face that I shall never forget.

"Ada," said her father, gravely, "are you satisfied

now that not one of these three soldiers is Monsieur Jules? If you are convinced, had you not better go to your own room?"

She looked at each Prussian separately, with a bewildered gaze, as if she were losing her senses, but remained fixed in the place where she stood, and did not utter a single word.

"You have a young lady here, and she is very pretty," said the Prussian corporal, with his fearful and wonderful French pronunciation ("Fous afez une témoisselle ici qui, ma foi, est pien shôlie").

Then he went on, in a loud and careless voice, like a man who knows that he is master of the situation, and that he is powerful enough to be alike above criticism and contradiction.

"You have got up early to-day, my pretty girl. It was because you expected me, was it not? Well, you see, here I am. And you have got breakfast ready for us, so kindly! Four bowls for coffee — one, two, three, four. Eight eggs, just ready. That makes three bowls for us poor Germans, who are, oh, so hungry! and the fourth is for your own sweet self, my dear, who will doubtless keep us company on this auspicious occasion. Is the coffee quite ready? Do be so kind as to pour it out."

M. de Marmorne had listened to this speech with beetling brows. As for me, I hastened to pour out the coffee, and act as waiter generally, so as to prevent Ada from even attempting to obey. Then her father said, with the formality of an offended Frenchman, "I wish

to explain that this young lady is my daughter, and that I do not approve of the familiar tone in which you think it becoming to address her."

The dignity of the old gentleman's manner momentarily cowed the Prussians. Then he offered his arm to Ada, and led her towards the door. One of the Uhlans jumped up, shut the door, setting his back against it, and said, "The young lady shall not leave the room. We will be civil to her. We know how to behave to ladies: we will not let her go away with a wrong impression about us."

The strange mixture of roughness and a sort of civility in this action and speech embarrassed M. de Marmorne, who, being quite unarmed, felt himself completely in the power of the invaders. It occurred to me since, that they had a serious reason for keeping us all in the room. They did not want the fact of their arrival to be spread abroad just at first.

"Mademoiselle," said the corporal, "be so good as to sit down with us, and take your coffee. We will behave properly. I meant no offence when I said you were a pretty young lady."

Poor Ada sat down mechanically. I thought perhaps the stimulus of coffee might be of real service to her just then, under the blow of her crushing disappointment; so I begged her to take it if she could, and she drank a little without eating anything. The Prussians were hungry as wolves, and soon finished the light, early, French breakfast, after which they civilly begged for something more substantial.

Just then I perceived a face against the window-pane outside. It was there for one instant, with its two wide-opened eyes—then vanished. I was the only person in the room who saw this sudden apparition, and I did not immediately recognise it. On reflection I knew it to be Jean the coachman, who lived near the stable in the outbuildings, and who had adopted this cautious manner of informing himself about our strange guests.

LVI.

There was an old housekeeper at M. de Marmorne's called Gustine, the same authoritative old woman who had asserted her readiness to face the Prussians and her contempt for the German powers. It was now her usual time for getting up. I heard her step in the passage leading from the dining-room to the kitchen. She, on her part, heard voices in the dining-room, and came to see who there could be.

The comic element which is always presenting itself in human life, even in the most serious circumstances, here produced a diversion in our thoughts which had the effect of a sudden relief. What would old Gustine do? She opened the door wide, and stared at us all in blank astonishment.

"Well, Gustine," said M. de Marmorne, "here you see the Prussians, who have come at last. They want a substantial breakfast, so you must set cook to work."

After the first instant of surprise, old Gustine's assurance came back to her in all its plenitude. "I

declare, I never saw such a sight before—a Mademoiselle de Marmorne seated at the same table with common soldiers such as these! Come, Mademoiselle Ada, just you go to your own room. This is not a fit place for you." And she took Ada's arm, and led her to the door.

The same soldier who had prevented Ada's exit before, placed his back to the door again. "La témoisselle ne sortira bas," he said, very decidedly.

Gustine's eyes flashed fire. "Get out of my way, thou Prussian abomination!" she exclaimed, in resolute tones; "thinkest thou I am afraid of an overgrown boy like *thee!*" Here she suddenly seized a pair of tongs, took a glowing ember out of the fire, and put it immediately under the German soldier's nose, so close that his moustache began to frizzle. The poor man was so taken aback by this, that he gave way at once; and the other two burst into a peal of laughter at the absurdity of his discomfiture. Immediately afterwards, Ada and Gustine had disappeared. The old housekeeper was as good as her word. I do verily believe that she feared no Prussian on earth; but, at the same time, I think it highly probable that much of this boldness was due to a sense of feminine immunity.

We saw no more of Ada that morning. The Germans ate and drank prodigiously, finishing their repast with a goblet of pure brandy, which each man swallowed as if it had been champagne. Then they took out big porcelain pipes, and lighted them. There was as much tobacco in each of those pipes as would have supplied the need of a moderate smoker for a day.

By this time it was broad daylight, and the corporal intimated to M. de Marmorne a desire to see the interior of the chateau. "Fous afez une pelle maison," he said in his Teutonic French, "et she foudrais la foir."

The Germans made the old gentleman serve them as a guide, exactly as if he had been a *cicerone*, and they tourists, in a time of profound peace. If he passed a door without opening it, one of the soldiers opened it and peeped in. By this means they discovered the *salon*, which they admired very much, and then they made M. de Marmorne take them to the upper storey.

Here they really seemed to enjoy the museum, which was a fine and interesting collection for a private gentleman, of a very miscellaneous character. Somebody once remarked that it was like Victor Hugo's 'Légende des Siècles:' it contained specimens from all past times, and was so arranged as to carry the mind down from the earliest ages to our own. There was not much of each century, but it was well chosen. Amongst other things was a small but fine collection of Gallo-Roman jewellery, including one magnificent ring of the purest gold and big enough for a bishop. The Prussian corporal took this out of its case, and tried it on. The ring fitted exactly, and he seemed to hesitate an instant about keeping it. Finally, however, he replaced it carefully on its little square of crimson velvet.

M. de Marmorne had watched this action with interest. He was pleased with the German's conduct, took the ring, and gave it him. "You seem to be an honourable man," he said, "and it is a pleasure to

me to give you this, if you will accept it. Spare some Frenchman's life in return for it." The soldier put the ring on his finger, and expressed his thanks.

The arms in the museum, dating from the invention of gunpowder, suited the men most of all. They handled them, and played with them as children do with a curious old toy that has belonged to the children of a past generation. Just then a vague anxiety began to take possession of me. I knew that there were spare arms belonging to M. de Marmorne's free-shooters ("The Children of the Forest") in some closet near the museum. There were two or three such closets with doors opening into the large room where we were.

Two of the Uhlans listened with interest to M. de Marmorne's explanations, for our host was by this time doing the honours of his museum (from sheer habit) just as he was accustomed to do for French visitors. The third Uhlan, however, did not understand French, and could not follow the explanations. The man was ferreting about on his own account, and at last from sheer curiosity looked into a closet. There was nothing but fragments of Roman and Gaulish pottery in *that* closet. Unluckily the man's investigations did not stop there. Before I could devise any practicable means of preventing him (M. de Marmorne being entirely absorbed in exhibiting a Roman pocket-knife, wonderfully like the modern instrument), he opened another closet-door, and uttered a loud exclamation in German, which soon drew his fellow-soldiers to his side. There were twenty rifles there, *chassepots*, all bright and new.

"Ah, sir!" said the corporal, turning to M. de Marmorne with a very grave expression, "these things are not antiquities. You had better get them out of the way. How came they here, I wonder?" The soldiers then exchanged a few words in German. One of them took a small gunsmith's tool from his pocket, and in ten minutes all the twenty rifles were practically useless. Whilst this operation was going forward, the corporal said, "Our orders compel this. We cannot leave wasps without taking out their stings; but I recommend you to hide them. They can do nothing for your protection now, and may bring you into trouble."

Five minutes later the three Uhlans were riding out of the courtyard. They did not go through the valley of Marmorne, but followed the road leading through the forest in the direction by which they had come. Evidently the one object of their visit had been to see the chateau of Marmorne. They had seen rather too much, I thought.

LVII.

There were several old towers about the house, all of them, except one, being crowned with the usual French pepper-box roofs. The single exception had been arranged in recent times as a look-out. The roof had been removed, the tower itself had been raised a few feet, and it had been covered with flat leads. A stone balustrade went round, at the height of a man's elbow; and often, in the fine evenings, we used to ascend the winding stair and watch the sunset from this elevation. On fine

evenings, the Loire could be seen glittering in the far distance.

Another advantage of this tower was, that it commanded the forest road—not for its whole length, but at intervals. I mean that, as the road wound about the forest, it became visible here and there for a space of one or two hundred yards.

A vague apprehension prompted me to ascend the tower, to see the last of our German visitors. I took a double opera-glass with me from the hall, and got to my post of observation before they were far advanced on their journey. It was a clear morning, and I could see the intervals of open road very distinctly with the help of the glass.

I watched for them at the first opening, and, after waiting a few seconds, saw them ride over it at a very rapid trot; then they disappeared amongst the trees. I heard next the crack of a rifle, and a succession of quick reports like those of a revolver.

My heart beat violently. I had never before been so near to the details of war. It is one thing to know that war is raging at some distance, and another to hear the sharp, harsh voice of it close at hand.

I fixed the glass steadily at the next bit of open road. The Prussian horsemen dashed along it, this time at full gallop, but there were only two of them. The whole truth flashed upon me in an instant. Jean, M. de Marmorne's servant, had posted some of the "Children of the Forest" at intervals along the road leading from Marmorne, and it was not likely that one of the Prussians would escape.

The smoke of the first shots now rose slowly out of the trees, like an exhalation, in the still autumnal air. Smoke ascended also from a farther point, this time before the noise of the rifles reached me. I heard it at last; and, just as I heard it, a single horseman emerged on the open road, galloping as fast as his charger could carry him, his pennon flying like a bird through the air. He was fired at again whilst riding where I could see him; but the shots did not take effect. Then there was no more firing, and the woods relapsed into their usual tranquillity.

An irresistible impulse now compelled me to go and see exactly what had happened. Two of the Uhlans had fallen—that was evident; but were they killed or only wounded? and had the third really escaped?

I was down in the garden immediately, and soon in the forest road. I met no one, and was by this time too well known in the neighbourhood to fear anything from M. de Marmorne's riflemen. The *francs-tireurs* who had fired were nowhere to be seen. They had disappeared in the forest, having done their deadly work, or as much of it as circumstances had permitted.

After walking briskly for some time, I thought I saw a dark-looking lump in the distance, and, on coming nearer, found it to be, what I expected, the body of one of the Germans. He lay perfectly dead, having been shot through the lungs; and his head was severely bruised by the fall from his horse. The blood had flowed freely from the wound, and also from the man's mouth, which was wide open, as were his eyes, the latter

having the strangest expression of astonishment. The horse was quietly grazing a few yards off, in the ditch; and he neighed loudly when I approached, plainly expressing his anxiety about his master. I did not stay to pay attention to him, but proceeded at once to see if the other soldier had been also killed, as it was still possible that he might have been only wounded.

I found him lying at the bottom of a hollow, where the road passed a small water-course, on a wooden bridge. His horse was close by, evidently dead, lying on its back with all its feet in the air, like Pegasus wrong side up. The man had fallen clear of his charger; and, on a nearer approach, I perceived that he was not dead. He heard me coming, and had even strength to raise his head on his hand, supporting it with his elbow. I at once recognised the corporal. He knew me again also, and made an effort to speak.

"Te l'eau," he said, faintly; "tonnez-moi te l'eau."

I had a flask with a cup, so I got him some water from the rivulet. This revived him, and he went on talking in his broken, defective French, the ludicrous accent contrasting oddly with his tragic situation.

"Those rascally free-shooters," he said, "lay in wait for us like brigands, and never showed their faces. This is not warfare. However, I'm done for."

I asked if I could do anything for him. "Yes," he answered: "that old gentleman at the chateau behaved well to us this morning, so I will do him a good turn now. Tell him that, after what has happened, our fel-

lows will be down upon him in a few hours. If he wishes to save anything, there's no time to lose."

Here he paused, as if thinking of something else, and then put the question, "Are you a Frenchman?"

"No; English."

The answer seemed very agreeable to him. "I thought you did not look French," he went on. "Well, empty my pockets, and please send all you find to my old mother. Her address is inside my purse, on a little card. Ask your friend to give something for the ring, and send it with my money. My mother is very poor, and she has nobody now to help her."

Before I could make any promise, the poor fellow was seized with intolerable agony, and rolled over on his breast. I then perceived a wound in or near the spine. During the paroxysm of pain that followed, this victim of other men's ambition shrieked aloud in his anguish and clutched at the withered grass. I could do absolutely nothing for his relief. There he lay prostrate, writhing, as fine a young man as eyes ever looked upon, the muscular figure filling his costume as a hand fills a well-made glove. After some violent convulsive movements, the end came, more suddenly than I had expected, and he died with his face upon the earth, the arms stretched out to the uttermost, the hands clenched.

I felt a repugnance to seeking for what was in his pockets, but did it in obedience to his wish. I found his purse, with a few silver coins in it, and a single piece of gold. There was the card, too, with his mother's address. I removed the antique ring from the dead hand

(it had not proved a talisman of safety), and put it in the purse. I took the poor fellow's watch, a common silver one, and sought in vain for anything else of any appreciable value. The next thing was to see M. de Marmorne.

Whilst returning to the chateau, I passed by the corpse of the other soldier, and remarked that it was the man who had spoken French. The third, who had escaped, was he who spoke nothing but German, and who had discovered the rifles in the closet. This was much against M. de Marmorne, as the report would be as hostile as possible. Evidently the surviving Uhlan would tell his officers that his comrades had been murdered by M. de Marmorne's orders. Had the corporal been the survivor, his account might have been nearer to the exact truth.

LVIII.

On returning to the house, I found the owner of it still ignorant of what had happened. M. Didier, mayor of the village, arrived in a few minutes, and there was a serious consultation, to which M. de Marmorne invited me, out of courtesy.

M. Didier was well informed about the position and strength of the enemy. "They were only forty kilometres from here last evening," he said; "and it is very likely that we shall have them in this place to-night, or early to-morrow morning. We must employ our time well in the interval. The main question for you," he said, turning to M. de Marmorne, "is whether you intend to stay here or to go away."

"I intend to stay."

"Well, if that is your decision, I suppose it's of no use arguing with you, for you don't generally pay much attention to other people's recommendations—eh? do you now?—but if I were you *I'd go.* I stay, of course, being the mayor, but there's no necessity for you to expose yourself."

"If I left the house, the Prussians would sack and pillage it. If I stay, there is some chance of preserving it. That is one reason. There is also another reason, which is that our *francs-tireurs* look up to me as their captain, and it is out of the question that I should desert them at the very first approach of danger."

"I never liked your fancy for *francs-tireurs*, my dear neighbour, and never believed that they could do much for France," said M. Didier, gravely; "and now they have got us into a mess. If we had simply remained quiet, the Prussians would have let us alone; but now, with those Uhlans slaughtered in the forest, we know what we have to expect. However, we have no time to lose in finding fault with one another; and for aught I know, this may be the last conversation of two old friends and neighbours, so we will not quarrel. If you won't leave Marmorne yourself, pray send the young ladies to a place of safety, and do it at once."

I naturally suggested the chateau of Boisvipère. M. de Marmorne thanked me with formal politeness, but said that Boisvipère was very likely to be visited by the Prussian cavalry, whereas it might be possible to find a retreat where the ladies were less likely to be disturbed.

As I had so courteously mentioned Boisvipère, perhaps I might not think it too great a liberty if he were to propose the chalet at La Creuse. It would be large enough for a temporary retreat, and probably the best hiding-place in that part of France. The road to it might easily be stopped against cavalry by felling a few trees, and provisions could be carried through the forest by a messenger on foot who knew the country. As for firewood, there was plenty close at hand. I was a little surprised that M. de Marmorne should prefer a place like the chalet, which was only a bachelor's lodging fit for an officer or a priest, to a place like Boisvipère, where there were whole suites of apartments lying empty from year's end to year's end; but on reflection it occurred to me that my host's French sentiments about propriety might have something to do with his decision. My brother Emil was at Boisvipère, alone; and the old French gentleman did not choose that his daughters should stay under the same roof. It was therefore at once decided that Ada and Abeille should go to La Creuse, with Gustine for a servant, and the two gardeners as protectors and messengers to fetch provisions.

There was not an atom of furniture yet in the chalet, as I had not intended to use it before the spring, and had postponed the amusement of furnishing, with the intention of enjoying it at my leisure. My project had been to employ a joiner in the village, who was to realise my fancies gradually, and make a *mobilier* of an entirely original character, perfectly adapted to my own tastes and to the peculiar nature of the place. So it happened

that up to the present date there was nothing in the chalet but its own cupboards and doors. On the other hand, it was a satisfaction that the chalet itself had been entirely finished, and there was really nothing to do but transfer to it a little of the superfluous furniture which filled the rooms and cabinets of Marmorne.

Our council of war had not lasted more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour when it was decided to postpone further deliberation until all the necessary things, and the ladies along with them, had been sent to their destination. We set about this business with a degree of energy that was highly beneficial to our minds by affording a complete though temporary relief to our anxieties. There were several pairs of oxen in the stables, all perfectly accustomed to drawing carts over the rough forest roads; and as that to La Creuse was one of the worst of these, cut up, too, by being too much used when the lake was made and never repaired since, it was thought better to use oxen than horses. The farm-servants quickly harnessed them in the primitive ancient fashion, by a wooden yoke fastened with thongs about the horns, the massive poles of the carts resting upon the yoke, to which they were fastened by a simple wooden peg, kept in its place by withes. Ada and Abeille were informed of their father's decision, and the younger sister threw herself into the business with an activity that took me by surprise. As for poor Ada, she went about like a woman in a dream, having more the appearance of a somnambulist than that of a person in her waking senses.

I put myself at once under Abeille's orders, and had the satisfaction of making myself useful. An Englishman is usually quite alive to the value of material comforts, and it would be a grave anxiety indeed that could make him forget the appliances of physical civilisation. I got a blank book and wrote down everything that the ladies were likely to require, aided in this by Abeille, who came running to me every few minutes to mention some other item. Then we overhauled some rarely-used rooms in the towers, reserved in happier years for male guests in the shooting season, and where the furniture was more portable than it was in the better bedchambers. In this way we soon got together a sort of military *mobilier*, light iron bedsteads, small washstands that shut up like boxes, folding-chairs, little convenient chests of drawers, cosey bits of carpet, and other such comforts. I knew what would go well into the chalet, and encumbered myself with no useless lumber. Matters connected with the kitchen were beyond my competence: but Abeille thoroughly understood all that department; and Gustine obeyed her orders with alacrity, giving advice of her own all the time about pots and pans, which I have no doubt was excellent, though my ignorance prevented me from appreciating it in detail.

My servant Perrin was with his old mother at Les Chaumes, and my horses were both at Boisvipère, where they would have to remain, as I had no stabling of any kind at the chalet. I sent a messenger for Perrin, and he arrived soon after the departure of the slow ox-carts. We then harnessed M. de Marmorne's two horses sepa-

rately, each to a farmer's light spring-cart; and I drove one of these conveyances with the ladies in it, whilst Perrin, Gustine, and the gardeners followed close behind in the other. The ladies had no companion of their own rank, for Abeille's *gouvernante*, a very timid elderly lady, had fled from Marmorne to friends of hers beyond the Loire, on the first distant approach of the invading army. I did not intend to remain at the chalet during the night, but meant to return to Marmorne and witness whatever events might take place during the anxious time which was now immediately before us.

LIX.

The chalet was unquestionably by far the best place of retreat in the whole neighbourhood. La Creuse was a nook by itself, a sort of "end of the world," as the French often call a place by which no road passes, and beyond which, when you get there, it seems almost impossible to go. The wild forest road that led to it stopped abruptly on the water's edge, at a point from which the chalet was not visible. I have already observed that this road could easily be blocked by felling a few trees; and it was decided to do this after conveying the furniture, so that, if by chance any German horsemen explored it in their wanderings, they might be stopped before coming in sight of the lake. It was not probable that curiosity would lead them so far; and if it did, there was little likelihood of their returning to tell the tale, for M. de Marmorne had assigned positions

in the forest to half-a-dozen of his *francs-tireurs*, who erected for themselves little wigwams in the most secret places whilst we were occupied with the arrangement of the furniture for the ladies. On the other hand, no attempt was made to defend the chateau of Boisvipère. Emil had hoisted the Union-jack on one of the pavilions, which he fancied would be some protection; and he quietly awaited the possible arrival of the enemy, with no arms in the house but the little arsenal of a sportsman, and no other servants than Joseph Migeon and his wife.

The road to La Creuse passed by Boisvipère; and I stayed a few minutes to rest the horses and speak to Emil, whom I had not seen for several days. He received me with more cordiality than usual, and hastened to see the ladies, whom he politely invited to rest in the chateau for a few hours, until the chalet could be prepared for their reception. Ada was on the point of accepting this proposal; but Abeille answered, with an unaccustomed decision, that she and her sister had much to do, personally, about furnishing the chalet, and would require all the little time there was to make it habitable before night. I suggested that Migeon might be useful; on which, to my surprise, Emil answered that he unfortunately could not be spared, nor did my brother offer his own personal services. After politely bidding adieu to the ladies, he returned to the chateau; and I noticed that the expression of open cordiality on his countenance gave way to a look of anxiety, such as I had only observed in him on occasions when something

concerned him personally, so as to interfere with the execution of his plans. Even the events at Marmorne, which I had briefly narrated, scarcely seemed enough to account for it.

The chalet was just, and only just, large enough to accommodate its new guests. The plan of the little building was simple in the extreme, and will be understood after a very short explanation. It consisted of a ground-floor, entirely occupied by the kitchen, with a scullery and pantry; a first floor, all in a single spacious sitting-room; a second floor of three small bedrooms; and a garret, occupying the whole undivided space above these. There was no interior staircase whatever; but an outside stair led up to a balcony and exterior passage or gallery which surrounded the little building and gave access to the different storeys. This exterior passage was boarded for protection against the wind on two sides, as it often is in the real Swiss chalets: but on the third it was partially open; and on the fourth, that looking towards the lake, entirely so, the passages there being simply balconies. The rooms were low, and the windows small, but rather numerous, with strong exterior shutters. Over all was a great overhanging shingle roof with rough stones upon it in genuine Alpine fashion. The building, in short, was a real chalet, and not a Parisian cockney's miniature villa. It was roughly yet sufficiently finished throughout with nothing but plain deal boards, except that the carpenters had amused themselves with a little rude chamfering, notching, and carving on the edges and ends of the joists.

We were numerous enough to make this little place quite habitable in a few hours. The three bedrooms served for the two ladies and Gustine, whilst the gardeners were to sleep in the garret. Had it not been for the anxieties of the time, this removal would have greatly amused us; and even under such trying circumstances it at least diverted the current of our thoughts. Ada could bring her mind occasionally, though not permanently, to grapple with small practical matters; and this was a benefit to her. She had a strangely embarrassed air sometimes about the most familiar details, showing that her thoughts were occupied elsewhere: but Abeille laughed at her affectionately when she made a mistake; and Ada herself could take some share in this sisterly merriment, though it was but a feeble one. She appeared to be bowed down by a heavy sorrow and anxiety, but not crushed by a hopeless disappointment.

The November sun had set behind the dense trees when all was finally in order. The ox-carts had gone back to Marmorne several hours before, and nothing remained at the chalet but the two ladies, myself, and our servants. We had all been working so hard that the idea of eating had never once occurred to us; but, now that it was all over, Gustine busied herself with culinary preparations. The ladies and I were standing on the balcony, sadly and silently looking on the flushes of the after-glow as they crimsoned the reds of the forest and were reflected on the waters of the lake. Gustine left her kitchen, walked out on the rocky bit of ground before the chalet, and looked up at us. "Monsieur

Adolphe," she said, in a tone partly of affirmation, partly of invitation, "dînera avec mesdemoiselles?"

This question of Gustine's affected the whole future relations between the young ladies and me. For them to offer hospitality to me was so clearly and directly contrary to all principles of French propriety that they could never have ventured upon it; nor could I in ordinary circumstances have exposed them to the social criticisms which would result from such a breach of the national etiquette; but then, the circumstances were so exceptional! I did not venture upon a reply to Gustine's question, but looked at Ada and Abeille as much as to say, "If you dare venture to ask me, I should be very happy to accept."

They, on their part, were as much embarrassed as I was. Ada looked at Abeille with a faint, sad smile; and whether it was the crimson of the after-glow that cast a reflection on the face of the younger sister or my own fancy, I know not, but it seemed to me that she blushed. However this may have been, they could not make up their minds about an answer.

Gustine looked at us all three, and understood our wishes and our difficulty. She settled the question in her own authoritative manner. "Oui, oui," she said, "monsieur dînera, c'est entendu."

"I suppose we must all submit to Gustine," I said, laughing. "I am not so rash as to venture upon resistance to a person of such authority."

"Nor we, either," answered Abeille, gaily: "she has ruled us all at Marmorne for years, ever since mamma

died, and now she is too strongly confirmed in habits of despotism not to be absolute mistress here."

This invitation put us on much easier terms, and from that moment I felt that a great embarrassment had been removed. Perrin made a bright fire; and when the shutters were closed and the candles lighted, the principal room of the chalet presented quite a pleasant appearance. Gustine's dinner was excellent and very nicely served. We were all very hungry in spite of our anxieties: indeed, without knowing it, we had already imbibed something of that spirit which infects every one in war-time—the spirit which lives in the present, seizing every hour of comparative ease and wellbeing without torturing itself overmuch about the possible miseries of to-morrow. The pleasant though simple room, with its fresh healthy odour of fir, the crackling and blazing fire, Gustine's good dinner, a glass or two of excellent Burgundy, and a feeling of adventure in the midst of the lonely vastness of the forest,—all combined to raise our spirits for the moment, so that we became gradually more cheerful under these favourable influences.

"How delightful this little place would be," said Abeille, "if we were not so anxious!" by which I suspect she really meant, "how delightful it is in spite of our anxieties!" Then she went on with surprising volubility for one who was usually as silent as a Trappistine.

"I never was in a chalet before, except a country-house belonging to a friend of ours which is called a chalet, but which is really a great chateau with fanciful wooden balconies and roofs. I did not admire that

much, but this is snugness itself. It is a place where I should have liked to play at being mistress of the house when I was a little girl."

"You may play at that here, if you like," said Ada —"here and now."

"Not very easily when you are there, dear sister, with your superior powers."

"I shall be too unfit for housekeeping," Ada said, mournfully: "I am fit for little now." Then she gazed steadily at the blank wall as if seeing through it, and trying to penetrate the secrets of Destiny, darker than the gloomy November woods that surrounded us. She gazed and gazed, then her dry eyes filled with tears that trickled slowly down her cheeks.

"I am a sad companion for you, Abeille," she went on, taking her sister's hand; "but you must bear with me. Remember it is St Elizabeth's Day, and he has not come! I wonder what has befallen him! I know he would have come if he had been able."

"He has been detained, in all probability, simply by some difficulty of communication occasioned by the war. All public conveyances are stopped, and private ones have the greatest difficulty in passing the lines of the opposing forces. Julius may even be a temporary prisoner with the Germans or the Garibaldians, but there is no reason to apprehend anything worse. Let us keep cheerful and hopeful about him. He will be here, very likely, in a few days."

"I feel more anxious about papa at Marmorne," said Abeille. "The Germans are sure to come back, and he

must have thought so or he would never have sent us here. I wish he had never had anything to do with those free-shooters of his."

Ada answered that she could hardly regret a decision which had been dictated by patriotism.

"But have not the free-shooters generally done more harm to French villages by drawing down upon them the vengeance of the enemy, than to the enemy by reducing their numbers?"

Ada said, however that might be, the free-shooters were acting patriotically in risking their lives for France; and that it was not a time for a too delicate consideration of consequences. The great thing, in her opinion, was for every man to embarrass the enemy as much as he could.

The discussion went on in this way with some vivacity, and Ada was prevented from thinking quite so much about Julius. This, of course, was Abeille's object in opposing her. Soon after dinner, I said good-night, intending to go with Perrin to Marmorne, in order to see what was going on. I promised either to send Perrin with news the next morning, or to bring it myself to the chalet.

LX.

It had been decided that, as there was no stable at the chalet, one of the two spring-carts should be kept at Boisvipère, to give the ladies a means of communication with the outer world when they desired it. We therefore pulled up at the chateau on our return, to leave

the cart there, intending to go down to Marmorne with the other. A singular incident occurred at Boisvipère when we stopped — an incident which may be worth mentioning in this place. Let me explain first some details about the topography of Boisvipère.

The chateau itself, as the reader is already aware, is a large rectangular building, erected round a courtyard, with towers or pavilions at the corners, in one of which I had fitted up apartments before my father's death, which my brother Emil afterwards kindly invited me to retain. This is the chateau proper, erected in the sixteenth century, chiefly with materials taken from a castle of the feudal times, which existed on a site at a little distance, now occupied by the stables and other out-buildings. It was at this cluster of out-buildings that we stayed to leave the horse and vehicle for the use of the inhabitants of the chalet. I was driving one cart, and Perrin the other; so I told Perrin to go and unharness, put his cart under a certain shed, and his horse in the stable where my own horses were kept—a place he knew well enough to find it in the dark. As soon, therefore, as the horse was out of the shafts, he led him to the stable; but Migeon's wife, whose dwelling was in the same yard, came out in a hurried manner, and said, "What are you going there for? What do you want there?" Having impatiently listened to his explanation, she said, "Put up the horse in the other stable." Perrin did not see why he was to obey Migeon's wife; but, to prevent a dispute, he yielded, and took the horse to the place she had indicated. There, to his astonish-

ment, he found my own horses carefully installed, with everything belonging to them; and his surprise was the greater that the stable they now inhabited had been considered, justly enough, too large and cold for such a small number of animals in the winter season. In summer, it might not have been objectionable; but from habit we had made no use of it since our arrival in France. As the weather was now cold, Perrin thought he ought not to leave M. de Marmorne's horse without clothing, and sought some spare clothing belonging to my own animals. Not finding what he wanted, he crossed the court to the old stable; but Migeon's wife stopped before the door as if determined to prevent him, telling him he would find no horse-cloths there. Being at last rather irritated by this opposition, Perrin pushed the woman out of his way, and tried to open the door, but found it securely fastened. She softened her manners as he became more determined, and promised to see to the horse herself, and find the *couverture*. He then wanted to get some nay from a loft over the old stable, and was going to fetch a ladder for the purpose, when she prevented him by saying that there was hay already in the new one, and corn too. In a word, there seemed to be a settled determination on her part to keep him out of the old stable.

Whilst this contest was going on between Perrin and Migeon's wife, it occurred to me that I should like to see Emil, as I intended to come back to Boisvipère, and stay there so long as the young ladies remained in their retreat. I knew that they would be glad to have me

within a little distance. It seemed due to Emil, as a matter of simple politeness, to announce this intention; so I left the cart I had been driving, and crossed on foot the open space that divided the out-buildings from the chateau.

Emil's private apartments were on the ground-floor, but his windows looked into the smaller of the two courtyards; and on entering this, I saw no light in them, nor anything to break the gloom and solitude of the house. The outer door had been left unfastened, and I walked in, groping my way as I best could towards my brother's rooms. I knocked, and got no answer; then entered, found a match in a familiar ornament in the chimney, lit a candle, threw myself in an arm-chair, and waited. The room was characteristic of its inhabitant, in its sober and business-like appearance, which made it look more like a lawyer's office than a country gentleman's private sitting-room. The old, meagre furniture and grey wainscot had been kept exactly as they were when we first became acquainted with Boisvipère, the only difference being that my brother's English habits could not do without a carpet, so he had made a piece of old tapestry serve that purpose; but the man of business was recognisable in the quantities of drawers and boxes about the room; drawers of common deal, unpainted, made by the joiner at Marmorne; tin boxes of various sizes, with the names of properties or persons painted on them in staring white-lead.

After waiting ten minutes, I began to feel impatient, and determined to go and look at my own apartments in

the pavilion, of which I kept the key. As the rooms were unpleasantly close, I threw all the windows open, and looked out upon the dreary landscape, if landscape it can be called, which surrounds the mansion of Boisvipère. There was no moon, but the stars were bright enough to make the sky luminous and the ground dimly visible; whilst the woods, by contrast, seemed a belt of impenetrable darkness. There was a certain fascination in the scene, simple as were its materials. It was a scene rather for a poet than for a painter—more affecting to the imagination than pleasing to the eye.

Whilst gazing on the open ground in the direction of the stables, I saw a dark figure move across it towards the chateau. I guessed rather than perceived that this was Emil, and went down towards his own rooms to meet him.

I never in my life saw such an expression on his face before as he had when we met in the corridor, and the light of my candle fell suddenly upon him. He started violently, and then looked at me as if he wished I were anywhere else. At last, when he could speak, he said, in a tone of surprise, "Is it you, Adolphus? I thought you had gone back to Marmorne?"

"No; but I am going just now. Won't you come with me?"

"I am glad you are going. It is well that there should be one of us with M. de Marmorne under present circumstances. I hear the Prussians are expected to-night."

"Would it not be better still if there were two of

us with M. de Marmorne? Will you not come with me?"

"I really cannot. I have a matter of business which requires attention, and will keep me to the house for some days."

"Matter of business," indeed! I wondered how it was possible for Emil, or anybody else, however perfect a man of business he might be, to attend assiduously to his affairs in a time of such excitement as that, when the raging tide of a tremendous conflict was close upon us, and surrounding us as a rock may be surrounded by the tumultuous waves of the ocean.

"Well," I replied, "perhaps M. de Marmorne will hardly expect you. As for me, I hope to be back at Boisvipère very soon, in my own rooms."

To this Emil said nothing whatever; but he looked vexed, anxious, and embarrassed. He was generally so much master of himself that if he had not been glad to have me in the house, he would have concealed his feelings under an appearance of polite satisfaction. My own plans were not affected by his manners—for I had made up my mind that no rudeness from my brother should for the present be an impediment in the way of my duty towards Ada; and though I could not live at the chalet with the young ladies, I was most firmly resolved to keep near them, so as to be at their service whenever they might happen to require me. No place but Boisvipère would answer this purpose, the forest region being so thinly peopled; and as the apartments in the pavilion had belonged to me before Emil inherited

the estate, and he had invited me to retain them, I felt independent of him until he formally withdrew his permission.

Hitherto, we had not said a word about Julius and his expected return on St Elizabeth's Day, so I observed—

"Ada de Marmorne expected Julius this morning, and got up early to receive him. If those Uhlans had not come and disturbed us all, she might have been more seriously affected by the disappointment. As it is, I have been surprised that she bore it so well."

"I am anxious about Julius," was Emil's answer to this. "As he did not reach Marmorne to-day, I fear that he is detained by some serious hindrance. Possibly he may be stopped somewhere as a spy: I only hope they won't shoot him, which is very possible. Travelling in France is most unsafe for foreigners just now."

I reflected on these matters whilst driving down to Marmorne, and determined upon my own line of conduct. If Emil's manners became unpleasant, I would avoid him, but cling resolutely to my rooms at Boisvipère. He could hardly go so far as to order me off the premises.

M. de Marmorne's fat carriage-horse trotted more vigorously towards his own home than might have been expected of him; but the road was all down-hill, and just tolerably good from Boisvipère in dry weather, though now and then a rut or a bare uneven surface of solid granite, would put the springs (fortunately strong ones) to a severe test, and place a momentary interval

between our persons and the artfully-suspended seat. Notwithstanding these physical shocks, enough to awaken any one from a reverie, my mind got completely absorbed in the anxieties of the time—so completely that I became absolutely insensible to surrounding objects, and thought no more about the road I was travelling over, than if I had been reading a novel in a railway train.

The road came out of the forest about a mile and a half from Marmorne, and there joined the *route départementale* with a sharp curve, just sufficiently steep for a horse to trot down it at his best; and as the *route* was a good one, it had a certain attraction, so that any vehicle coming from Boisvipère was sure to go round the curve in rather a dashing manner. Well, just as we were swinging round, I was suddenly awakened from my reverie by something bright flashing before my eyes; the horse stopped short, and I became aware that the metallic brightness was, in fact, a couple of bayonets.

One soldier had caught the bridle, another had set his rifle across my breast, and angrily told me that I was mad to try to trot past sentinels at that rate. "Have you the password?" he said.

"France," I answered, as nothing better suggested itself, and it was the usual answer made to sentinels by French people.

"That's not the password; however, I can let you go forwards a few yards. You will find other sentinels on the highroad; and mind you are more careful, and don't try to trot past them; for, if you do, you will be shot."

After this admonition, the other soldier let go the bridle, and I drove quietly forwards. As soon as the horse found himself on the good road within a short distance of Marmorne, he became difficult to hold, and trotted on, rather faster than I desired, until we came to a bridge. On the other side of the bridge was a wayside inn, called Les Trois Chênes, visible at some distance, as the road was straight. I thought there could be no harm in trotting up to this inn, where I was very well known, so I let the horse go, and he trotted on rather vigorously. However, when we came within twenty yards of the bridge, a sentinel, hitherto invisible, sprang into the middle of the road, and cried in a loud voice—

"Stop there! Qui vive?"

"France."

A pause of silence, then a sulky permission to advance a few yards.

"You may come on as far as the bridge, but not farther. Be careful."

When I reached the bridge, a sentinel on the other side called to me in most authoritative tones to stop. Then he asked me how it was I had got so far as that.

"Because the other sentinels let me pass."

I cannot tell what there was in my answer to make the man angry; but he was so, and said, "Est-ce que vous ripostez à une sentinelle?"

"You asked me a question."

"Vous ripostez de nouveau, hein?"

On this, M. de Marmorne's mare began to be impatient, and it was as much as I could do to hold her.

She had passed that bridge hundreds of times, but had never once been stopped on that side of it: she had sometimes stopped on the other side, when M. de Marmorne had something to say to the innkeeper; so, in spite of me, she advanced three or four yards.

"If you don't remain perfectly quiet, I fire," said the sentinel.

As for me, I could have remained quiet enough, but it was impossible to prevent the mare from lifting a single hoof. "Get down and hold her," I said to Perrin, who jumped down accordingly, and the mare at the same time moved a couple of yards.

The loud report of a rifle followed, and a ball whistled past my ear, just where Perrin had been seated a moment before. Had he not left his place, the consequence might have been serious for him.

The noise of the rifle seemed to create a considerable commotion on the other side of the bridge. All the windows in the inn were lighted, and cast a glare upon the road, by which I could see a number of soldiers hastily coming out. The patrol having been formed, and a word of command sharply given, they marched to where we were, surrounded us, took possession of the horse, informed Perrin and myself that we were prisoners, and marched us to Les Trois Chênes.

I cared very little for all this, the soldiers being French, and I well known in the neighbourhood; but it was a serious vexation to be detained and prevented from going to Marmorne, where the old gentleman was expecting me. When we got to Les Trois Chênes, the

innkeeper stood in the doorway, a big good-tempered fellow called Jolif, whom I knew well enough, and liked for his hearty though somewhat familiar civility.

As soon as Jolif recognised me, he raised his eyebrows in astonishment, declaring at the same time with his perfect fearlessness of manner that it was a stupid mistake to arrest me, even for an instant, as I was one of "*les notabilités du pays.*" The sergeant who commanded the *poste* at the Three Oaks was sufficiently impressed by Jolif's manner to make a sort of apology. "This gentleman and his servant," he said, "must consider themselves prisoners till morning; but they will be released at sunrise." We were then put in the great room of the inn, which was full of French infantry men, round a stove in the middle, red with extravagant supplies of wood; for it was a cold night, and the men roasted themselves, as people do who have been much exposed to cold.

The soldiers were civil to us, making room near the red-hot stove, which I declined with thanks, preferring a cooler corner. Here Jolif found me, and offered me some brandy-and-water, in a manner clearly implying that hospitality, and not profit, was his purpose. Not wishing to hurt his feelings, I accepted; and in due time he brought some sugar and hot water, with a slice of lemon, poured brandy on the surface of the water, and set fire thereto with such practised art and skill as I might vainly have attempted to emulate.

"Monsieur has been at Boisvipère to see his brother," said the innkeeper, "and perhaps he has not heard the

news. Perhaps he may have been rather surprised to find Les Trois Chênes occupied by the military?"

"I had hoped this neighbourhood was forgotten by the commanders of both armies, and left to peace and quietness."

"Well, so had we; but it seems we had been quiet long enough, and it's our turn to be disturbed at present. All the village of Marmorne is full of troops belonging to Garibaldi's army; the Prussians are expected in force to-night or to-morrow morning; for our own scouts report that they are already on the march, and there will be a fight. Nobody is allowed to leave the village for the present, not even a child. There are sentinels all round, as there are here to-night; and they stop every one who has not the password. I suppose when the Prussians come, the villagers will be allowed to escape into the woods."

"Luckily for you the Prussians will arrive at the other end of the village."

Jolif shrugged his shoulders. "Certainly just for the present we are better situated than we should be on the other side, but it is by no means certain that the Prussians will not find their way here also before long."

"I cannot see the use to the Germans of such a village as Marmorne, completely out of the way as it is, and of no importance, being neither populous nor fortified."

"From what I hear, they want to get possession of the road for the passage of their troops from west to east, because the Garibaldians occupy the lines of rail-

way that join the country of the Saône to the country of the Loire. This road that passes through Marmorne, though it is not a *route impériale* or *nationale* (as I should say now) is a good second-class road, a *route départementale*, and would be of great use to them; but it goes through some very narrow valleys which might be easily defended, and I rather think the Prussians will not get it into their hands, unless they are determined to sacrifice a good many men."

"Have the Garibaldians been here long?"

"Not more than a couple of hours. They received intelligence of the visit paid to the chateau early this morning by the Uhlans, and were immediately ordered to occupy Marmorne so as to be in before the Prussians came in force. Some Garibaldian cavalry got here before the infantry, and they are all in the chateau now. There may be about two thousand infantry and as many horsemen in the place."

"No artillery?"

"Not yet; but a battery of small mountain guns is expected here before morning, and it is not likely that the Prussians will come sooner. There will be some sharp fighting, I expect, about noon to-morrow. The Children of the Forest are acting as scouts, so we know pretty well all about the German advance."

"Do you know what M. de Marmorne is doing?"

"Monsieur le Comte" (the people in the village always called our friend by this title) "has been very busy all day with our *francs-tireurs*, as he did not count upon assistance from the Garibaldians; and he has posted

small bodies of men in various places where they might be useful."

Just at this minute, horses at full gallop were heard in the direction of Marmorne. They paused an instant on passing the sentinels, and stopped at the door of the inn. The sergeant in command of the outpost immediately went to the door, so did Jolif, who being at his own house walked about just as he liked. I myself, though a prisoner, felt impelled by curiosity to look at the new-comers, so I stood at the window, unimpeded by the soldiers, who were civil enough.

The horsemen were a Garibaldian field-officer with his orderly, and his business was soon explained. He gave orders to vacate the Trois Chênes, and told the soldiers to join their regiment in the village: even the sentinels were removed.

I could see that Jolif was arguing and expostulating with the colonel; but I could not hear what he said, on account of the noise of the soldiers about me. The innkeeper's perfect confidence in his own opinion was enough to sustain him in argument with any officer who ever wore gold lace—of which, by the way, the Garibaldian colonel had a sufficiency. Then I saw that Jolif was pointing in my direction, after which he beckoned to me, and I went out, unhindered, to the road, where the colonel was sitting on horseback. He received me with civility, returned my salute with more politeness than an officer usually thinks necessary, and listened to Jolif's question whether I ought not to be released.

"You were arrested because you tried to get into an occupied place after dark without a password?"

"Yes."

"I regret not to be able to release you without giving you the password; and that, under the circumstances, I cannot do. I can, however, give you the choice of remaining where you are for the night on parole that you will not attempt to enter the village before morning, or else you can go there now with the soldiers as a prisoner, and be kept in the guard-room till daylight, when the sergeant will release you. As for your servant, he must go with the soldiers."

Jolif turned to me his fat round face, and took the liberty of giving me a wink, visible enough by the light from the window. Then he said to the colonel coolly and decidedly, "Monsieur prefers to remain here." An instant after, I saw him talking in Perrin's ear; but what he said I had no opportunity for learning just then, as Perrin was marched off between two soldiers in the direction of Marmorne; and as to the colonel, he was clattering away at full trot before I could express any opinion of my own about the situation in which I found myself. However, there I was, a prisoner on parole till next morning, and not allowed to budge from the Three Oaks, though physically not less free than the deer in the forest hard by.

"I wish I had had time to send a word to M. de Marmorne," I said to Jolif rather peevishly, not being quite pleased with his intervention.

"C'est fait," was the laconic reply.

LXI.

I could get nothing further out of Jolif on the subject, except just this, that M. de Marmorne would be at the Three Oaks at eight o'clock in the morning, or perhaps earlier, when I might say what I liked to him.

The innkeeper then kindly offered me a bed. "You should try and get a night's rest," he said, sympathetically, "for to-morrow may be a hard day."

"Are you going to bed yourself?"

"I've something else to do."

The events of the day had excited me, as the first actual sight of warfare always does, however little one sees of it. Since rising early at Marmorne, I had for the first time in my life heard shots discharged in anger, and for the first time seen stalwart men, in the bloom of health and vigour, struck down as a sportsman shoots game. I felt myself, in the absence of Julius, too necessary to think about my own ease; for the ladies at La Creuse might require my services at any hour, and M. de Marmorne himself might need me as a friend whom he thoroughly trusted. Still I felt the awkwardness of my position as an Englishman and a neutral. The proper course, with regard to my own interests, would be simply to return to Boisvipère next morning, and there await the news of coming events; but I had promised Ada and Abeille to remain with M. de Marmorne until I had news of some consequence to communicate, when I was to return at once, if possible, to the chalet. By one of those illusions which are common

in women where their affections are concerned, the ladies evidently imagined that their father would be less exposed to danger if I were with him to look after him —as if warfare were a pleasure tour in which one friend may be an effectual protection to another. For the present, therefore, I had nothing to do but remain as near M. de Marmorne as I could.

I accepted Jolif's offer of a bedroom, and was soon lodged comfortably enough in the best chamber of the Three Oaks, a room of great size, with four beds in the four corners, the other three being happily unoccupied. It was at the same time a sort of *salon*, the pride of Madame Jolif; for here she exhibited, as in a museum, those works of art which satisfied her æsthetic needs. There were two chests of drawers in old walnut with tops of grey marble, whereon stood displayed all the china that she had inherited from her ancestors, or received as presents from her friends, or possibly even purchased at rare intervals in the occasional extravagance of fairs. There was a small round table in the middle of the room with an inconvenient red and green cover upon it, a masterpiece of thick knitting which might have been useful round a man's neck in cold weather, but now only slipped about on the polished wood, to the imminent danger of a tiny wash-hand basin placed there for my convenience. All the bedsteads were of well-rubbed walnut wood with chilly-looking white curtains, and great eider-down cushions, really made of the breast-feathers of geese stuffed into bags artfully composed of ancient silk dresses.

Why do I remember these details as if I were an artist taking note of interiors for use in some possible picture? Simply because they impressed themselves indelibly on my memory as I lay awake in my bed with the candle still burning, too restless and excited to shut my eyes, which wandered at one time over the black oak beams and joists, at another over the vulgar flowery wall-paper, at another over the wide brick floor with its little islands of carpet.

Thinking at last that I might possibly be able to sleep without a light, I extinguished the candle, and fell into a half-dream, a mixture of anxious fancies with realities that gave equal cause for anxiety, and whilst in this condition I heard Jolif and his wife talking in a low voice at the door of my big bedroom.

"Is he asleep?" said Jolif.

"The light is out at any rate. He must be asleep by this time."

"Is the place ready in the wood?"

"I dug it myself. It is very deep. Nobody will ever find it afterwards."

After that they spoke in lower whispers, and I could catch little or nothing. What I did catch, however, was not very reassuring.

"A cord will do," said the louder voice of the man, "with the counterpane of the bed; and if necessary the eider-down."

"If he were to awake?"

"What if he did? *I'll answer for him so that he shall tell no tales.*"

That last expression of Jolif's made everything perfectly clear to me. For some quite inconceivable reason he was going to take advantage of the troubles of the time to make away with me and bury me in the wood. "At any rate," I thought, "he shall know that I am awake."

The door opened, and Jolif entered noiselessly. "I may as well tell you," I said in a firm voice, "that I am not asleep!"

"Very well, sir," answered Jolif with wonderful coolness, "then I may strike a light without fear of disturbing you. Come in, wife, and let us do what we have to do. I'll answer for Monsieur: he'll tell no tales. The fact is, sir," he went on, turning to me, "that everything of any value belonging to us is kept in this chamber; and as the Prussians will be here most likely to-morrow, we are just taking the opportunity of hiding our little things. We are going to bury them in the wood. I know I can trust you, sir."

"Of course you can, Monsieur Jolif," said I, immensely relieved; "and if you want a hand to help you, I am very much at your service, being quite unable to get to sleep."

LXII.

I helped Jolif with his *cachette*, which was completed satisfactorily in an hour or two, and contained treasures of the most various value, including all the china things which had adorned my bedroom; and which had been wrapped up in an eider-down and counterpane for facility

of transport. Such *cachettes* were made in France during the war by thousands and tens of thousands. Very often they were so hidden that the owners themselves, for want of accurate observation, were unable to find them afterwards; but I took care that this should not be the case with Jolif's, by accurately measuring its distance from two rocks, and making a careful sketch of the triangle in my pocket-book.

This done, Jolif roused the house-servants, it being then three o'clock in the morning, and at once made arrangements for sending his wife, with all their best furniture, to a farm high up in the hills, occupied by a brother of his. Two large ox-waggons were soon laden with the things; and Madame Jolif was established perilously, but comfortably, on the top, where her stout form was supported by masses of bedding, as the goddesses of mythology were on clouds, if we are to believe the representations of painters. She earnestly entreated her husband to accompany her; but with the obstinacy of a man accustomed to have his own way he said there were some other things to look after, and so he must stay for the present, but would follow in the course of the morning. The waggons then got into slow motion, their lanterns dangling as they went, and casting an unsteady light upon the road.

When we got into the house, and Jolif lit a candle in the common room of the inn, I noticed that his eyes were brimming with tears. "She is a good woman, is that one," he said tenderly, "and we have had a happy life of it in this place for ten years, though she had no

children; and now when I see her going away with the furniture, it seems to me that it is all over."

"Why should it be all over? Your wife will come back again very soon when the Prussians are gone; and the Three Oaks will be as in former times, with plenty of peaceable customers."

"I cannot tell, I cannot tell! But you must be hungry, sir, by this time. Sleep is food, *qui dort dîne;* but you have had no sleep and must want food."

My host laid a small coarse table-cloth on one end of a long, massive, highly-polished oak table, produced a bottle of fair Burgundy, a piece of Gruyère cheese, some excellent smoked ham, and a loaf of bread. These materials, with white grapes for dessert, made a sufficient repast, and served to beguile the time of my captivity. The physical comfort produced by a satisfied appetite, succeeding to the fatigues of the previous twenty-four hours, brought on a feeling of drowsiness; and I threw myself on my bed, where I soon lost the sense of fatigue in the happy forgetfulness of sleep.

When I awoke it was broad daylight, and I was conscious that somebody was standing by the bedside. It was M. de Marmorne, dressed in the quiet-looking uniform of a *franc-tireur*, with the sprig of oak in his cap that distinguished the Enfants de la Forêt.

"Good morning, Monsieur Adolphe!" he said cheerfully. "I am happy to see that you have been able to rest a little, and did not wish to disturb you; but the truth is, that this will probably not be a safe place to remain in very long. We are expecting the Prussians

this morning in considerable force: had you not better go to Boisvipère?"

"I would rather stay with you during the day, and return to Boisvipère and La Creuse in the evening to tell the news. I promised Mesdemoiselles your daughters to stay with you."

"To take care of me, I suppose," said M. de Marmorne, laughing, "and see that old papa is not too rash and wilful. Well, we will try to be prudent; but it is not always easy to conciliate prudence with duty in such times as these. The fact is, those Garibaldians, who seem to be fine brave fellows, have most confused ideas about the geography of this part of the country, and are just now exposing themselves in the most reckless manner to a surprise in the rear. They know the good highroads which are marked on the ordnance map, but are utterly ignorant of the by-ways; and I have reasons for suspecting that the Prussians may be better informed. Your servant, Perrin, brought me a message this morning from Jolif, informing me that the Garibaldians had left this end of the village quite unguarded; and yet, if the Prussians intend to take them in the rear at all, they will come suddenly on the highroad within a hundred yards of this very place."

"How can they manage that?"

"By an old Roman road through the forest, good enough even yet for the passage of light artillery, and so completely concealed that their approach would be unsuspected until they came out on the highroad close to this place."

"And what do you propose?"

"I mean to stop them. The Children of the Forest are not strong in numbers; but they are good marksmen, well armed, and perfectly accustomed to the woods. They will meet at Les Trois Chênes very soon." Here he looked at his watch. "They will be here in twenty minutes. Some have arrived already."

The large room of the inn gradually filled with *francs-tireurs*, in the same grey uniform as M. de Marmorne, each of them armed with a good Remington rifle. They were a sturdy-looking set of men, most of them of short stature, but powerfully built, bronzed with exposure to the open air, and presenting the best characteristics of a highland race, which is to the Englishman or the German what the active, indefatigable ponies of the hill country are to the larger but less nimble horses of the plains.

When the Children of the Forest were all assembled, there were a hundred and twenty men, nearly all of them personally known to M. de Marmorne as neighbours or acquaintances that he had made in his scientific excursions, during which he saw much of the country people, in a friendly, familiar way rather surprising to an Englishman. He greeted many of them by name, talked to them, asked news of their relations, and offered some refreshment, which Jolif provided, in the shape of little cheeses made of goat's milk, brown bread, and common wine. The men formed in easy marching order outside the inn, and we started. I was going to say good-bye to Jolif, and thank him for his kindness, when he took

down a fowling-piece from a gun-rack, slung it over his shoulder, and announced his intention of accompanying us. He wore a blue blouse and leather gaiters, just as if he had been going out shooting; but remarked that it was no use carrying his bag, "because the game was too large."

Our walk was more like that of men on a hunting expedition than the march of a military force. M. de Marmorne came in the rear, with me on one side of him and the innkeeper on the other. The sergeant of the company had inquired where we were to go, and the answer was, "À la Roche des Aiglons," simply.

LXIII.

The weather was gloomy, and the sky entirely covered with one cloud of uniform grey; but there was not a breath of wind, and it was not exceptionally cold, as yet, for the time of the year: in short, it was what a sportsman would consider excellent shooting weather, as Jolif gaily remarked to M. de Marmorne. We kept on the highroad briskly for a short distance, in the direction opposite to that of Marmorne, and then turned aside into one of those narrow forest roads which are common in that part of France; but I soon observed that this one differed from others I had known in an important particular. It was narrow—just wide enough for one cart—and paved with huge blocks of stone made smooth by the rains of many centuries and worn by the passage of men and animals. In some places the stones had

been removed, and their place filled with sand and pebbles; in others, they were hidden beneath accumulations of earth: but we never marched very far without finding them again."

"This is the old Roman road," M. de Marmorne observed; "still passable as you perceive, and much more permanent than modern macadam. What wonderful energy those ancient Romans threw into all their undertakings, road-making amongst the rest! and how strongly they seem to have been imbued with the idea of permanence, making things to last with as little repair as possible, as if intending to occupy Gaul for a thousand years at least, which was very likely a project that they entertained! I suppose that in Cæsar's time no Roman looked forward seriously to the possibility of a decline and fall of the Empire, though here and there a philosopher or a poet recognised the truth that all things have an end."

"What a difference between the first soldiers who marched over this road—the heavily-laden Roman infantry, ignorant of fire-arms—and these *francs-tireurs* of yours with their repeating rifles!"

"And what a yet greater difference," M. de Marmorne answered, "between their purpose and ours! They, the most experienced and highly-trained soldiers then living in the world, marching to subjugate races who had no chance whatever against them, and were destined to be their natural prey; we, on the other hand, mere private citizens, trying to guard a corner of our native land against invaders whom our finest regiments have vainly endeavoured to arrest."

"If the attempt is hopeless, why make it?"

"I do not say that it is absolutely hopeless; and it is our duty to try what we can do, but we may very possibly be sacrificed in the attempt. The place we are going to defend is naturally very strong: but we are not numerous; and if the Prussians are in force, we may be surrounded and overpowered."

"Is it certain that the enemy will come this way? It seems a narrow road for him to choose, and not very good in many places."

Jolif answered this question by informing me that Uhlans had been seen exploring the Roman road the day before. A shepherd had seen them in an opening of the forest five or six miles from Les Trois Chênes, and had come to tell Jolif in the evening. To this M. de Marmorne added that, as the Garibaldians were now in the village, and the Prussians most probably well aware of their presence through spies, it was not at all unlikely that they might send troops, by two different roads, to catch the Garibaldians as between the points of a pair of calipers. "This Roman road, as you see, though not perfect, is still passable, even for light artillery; and it is as good throughout its whole length as it is here. We have evidence that the enemy is aware of its existence; so there is every likelihood that he will avail himself of it. I explained this clearly to the colonel in command of the Garibaldians; but he took my apprehensions for the fears of a civilian, unaccustomed to military matters, and did not give them the slightest attention. He even went so far as to withdraw the

outpost from Les Trois Chênes, which I should have thought any military man would have kept there in simple obedience to the custom of his profession, even though he apprehended no actual danger on that side. When I saw that the colonel would not pay any attention to my advice, I asked if he had any objection to my guarding the Roman road with my *francs-tireurs*, and he answered promptly, 'Do so, by all means.' I could see by the expression of his countenance that he thought it an excellent opportunity for getting rid of me. He thinks that we are going on a sort of picnic, to do a little amateur soldiering in the woods, which may be good exercise for us, and a healthy amusement, without danger to life or limb."

The old gentleman went on to say that, in his opinion, the ignorance of minute local geography, and a sort of contempt for it, had been the bane of the French armies during the war; and he mentioned several instances of Prussian surprises which might have been readily prevented by such measures of precaution as that which he was now taking.

We went on talking in this way quite freely for nearly an hour, when we suddenly heard the steps of a horse at some distance before us in the wood. Its rider was evidently pushing on towards us as fast as the nature of the road would permit him, sometimes at full gallop, sometimes at a very rapid trot. The *francs-tireurs* then halted; and, at a word from the colonel, all suddenly disappeared in the wood, hiding themselves so effectually that not a *képi* nor a rifle was to be seen. The Roman

road, covered an instant before with armed men, was now apparently as unfrequented as if nothing had ever traversed it since the days of Julius Cæsar, except the wild deer going from one cover to another. M. de Marmorne waited till all were out of sight, and then hid himself behind some dense juniper-bushes, still impenetrable to the eye, though reddened with the hues of winter. I myself found safe hiding in a hollow, at a little distance from which I could see M. de Marmorne.

The horseman now rapidly approached us, and our leader not only listened attentively, but placed himself in such a position that he could observe the road, himself entirely invisible. When the rider came near enough to be visible, M. de Marmorne rose to his feet and walked to the middle of the road. Surely, a hundred armed men never hid themselves for so little! The horseman was nothing but a boy of twelve years old, mounted on one of the swift and hardy ponies of the country, entirely unadorned with a saddle, and evidently unacquainted with the curry-comb. As for the equestrian himself, he was bare-headed and bare-footed, having probably lost his wooden shoes in the rapidity of his flight. The rest of his costume was home-spun and home-made, of bluish material, very much worn, and decorated with several large patches much fresher and bluer than the rest. The boy spoke the *patois* of the hills, and with such extreme volubility that I understood nothing of what he said.

"The Germans are advancing towards us," said M. de Marmorne; "and, from what the boy tells me, they

seem to be infantry only, as he has seen no Uhlans. I suppose the German commander did not wish to attract attention to-day by sending Uhlans in advance. They are still at a sufficient distance to give us time to get to the Roche des Aiglons." Our leader then wrote a few words on a slip of paper and handed it to the boy, who disappeared immediately in the direction of Marmorne; whilst, at the word of command, all the *francs-tireurs* leaped from their hiding-places, and were soon marching on the road again, two abreast, at a very rapid pace, which soon increased to the "double." After running in this way for twenty minutes, we found ourselves in a place which deserves to be described in detail.

It was a narrow and deep valley, thickly wooded on both sides wherever there was earth enough for trees to grow, but not wooded at the bottom, which was perfectly flat, and had been used apparently as a pasture. A small and clear stream flowed through this open green; but by far the most conspicuous feature of the landscape was a projecting buttress or spur of hill, which advanced into the pasture, and consisted of nothing but bare rock, on which hardly even a blade of grass was visible. The rock itself had been carved by natural agencies into the most picturesque variety of forms, reminding one of some rude yet fanciful architecture which might have been conceived and executed in prehistoric times. Its almost perpendicular sides were ravined with crevices and hollows; whilst its summit was adorned with a crown of granite blocks, a few of which had been loosened by frost or flood, and lay in

the plain below. Even in this dull November weather, with the grey sky through which light could penetrate, but no sunshine, the sad-looking forest which had lost the gold of autumn, and had now nothing but the rusty reds and chill greys of the dead year—even with all these disadvantages, the scene was still both striking and attractive; but how much more so it must have been in the leafy freshness of summer, with a blue sky overhead, the merry sunshine glittering on the brook, and broad, cool shadows lying in the hollows of the rocks, when the shepherd could watch his flock in the quiet pasture not fearing any human enemy!

LXIV.

Although the Roche des Aiglons seemed at first sight completely inaccessible, there were in reality two ways of getting to the top of it—either by a narrow path winding up one of its sides, or else by first ascending the hill behind it, which could only be done through the wood, and then coming upon the rock by a narrow neck of land which joined it to the mass of hill that it seemed to defend. To save time, M. de Marmorne chose the direct ascent of the rock itself. The height of it above the level of the pasture was between two and three hundred feet; and when we got to the top, which we did in a few minutes, it became evident that this degree of elevation, though much inferior to that of the surrounding hills, was quite sufficient to give us full command of the road for a clear space of about half a mile, as it

skirted the pasture, well outside of the trees. At each end of this open space, the road buried itself so completely in the wood that not the least trace of it was visible.

Our leader was now surrounded by his men on the top of the Roche des Aiglons, and a brief council of war ensued between him and a few old soldiers in his band. Two propositions had to be considered. The Prussians might be fired upon as soon as ever they showed themselves; or the riflemen might wait until the whole of the road was covered with them, and then do as much execution as possible. The first plan was easier to execute, both because it required less self-restraint, and also because the fire might be more effectual, since it would be more concentrated: but if the second plan could be properly carried out, the result might be more serious for the enemy; so its adoption was finally decided upon. No rifleman was to fire until he heard M. de Marmorne's horn, one of those handy little horns used on the Continental railways, which, without seeming loud, give a sound of a very penetrating quality.

I have said that the top of the Roche des Aiglons was crowned with blocks of granite visible from the road. Now that we were on the summit of the rock itself, both the size and number of these blocks greatly exceeded my expectations, and it was easy to conceal the men, so that not one of them could be detected by the Prussian officers even with the aid of their glasses. In five minutes they were all placed so as to command the road with their rifles. M. de Marmorne occupied one of the best

positions for watching the advance of the enemy, and I was close by his side. He had no rifle, being armed only with a sword and a brace of large revolvers in his belt: as for me, I had nothing but a pocket revolver of small calibre, which might be effective at close quarters, but was absolutely useless at a distance.

The most profound silence now reigned all over the Roche des Aiglons and the secluded little valley in which it was situated; and if some solitary English traveller had found his way into it just then, he would not have suspected the presence of a hundred men, armed with the deadliest weapons in the world, and fully determined to use them. Had he been an artist, our supposed traveller might have sketched the Roche with tranquil satisfaction, and even felt the temptation to put a goat or two upon it, in order to relieve its too perfect solitude with a little animal life.

We waited in this manner more than half an hour, the only incident being an attempt to smoke by a tobacco-loving *franc-tireur*, which was immediately repressed by M. de Marmorne, as the cloud of smoke raised by his unprofitable industry would have been clearly visible at a distance. At length our leader placed his big brown hand on my arm, and pointed through a crevice between two rocks which was his own post of observation. I saw two men on foot coming out of the wood to the west. They were dressed in a dark uniform, and wore spiked helmets—the very first spiked helmets I had met with, so they produced some impression upon me.

These men did not advance far, but returned to the wood. A few minutes later the Prussians reappeared, this time a whole infantry regiment, moving at a brisk pace over the road, the field-officers on foot, their horses being led by orderlies.

M. de Marmorne waited until there must have been five hundred men in sight, then he raised the little horn to his lips and sounded its one clear, reedy note, as a French railway guard does when the train is ready to start.

Those little horns, as I have said, can be heard at a considerable distance, and very probably the Prussians heard that one ; but if they did, the difference in rapidity between the undulations of light and sound must have shown them first a hundred puffs of smoke from the sides and summit of our little Gibraltar. And then they heard the rattle of our Remingtons.

At an earlier stage in the history of firearms, our volley would have been succeeded by a short interval for reloading ; but, with our modern repeating rifles, the fire was uninterrupted. The effect of it on the enemy was a momentary confusion, less than I should have expected under the circumstances ; for, after the first surprise, the Prussians soon recovered the direction of their movements. They neither retreated nor advanced along the road, but sheltered themselves at once in the wood above them, carrying the wounded with them, and leaving only the dead, of whom there were twenty or thirty. Once in the wood, they got behind the trunks of the trees, and hid themselves in the brushwood, so that not

one of them was to be seen; but a few seconds afterwards their position was made clear to us by a volley. It was highly improbable that any of them could see a human being on the Roche des Aiglons, so well were we all hidden; but they aimed cleverly at the crevices in the rocks from which our own fire had proceeded, and in this way they killed two or three of our *francs-tireurs* and wounded several more. Meanwhile, there was no further advance along the road, the main body of Germans having halted before emerging from the wood.

The skirmish now continued between the Roche and the wood opposite, with hardly any losses on either side, although the firing was vigorous enough. M. de Marmorne then gave orders to cease firing unless an enemy offered himself as a safe mark, as our men were evidently wasting their ammunition. I asked what he intended to do, and was told in answer that the real object of our presence in the valley was to stop the German artillery, which we were doing effectually enough without firing, as the artillery could not venture to show itself on the open space of road. We had nothing to do but remain at our post as long as possible.

For nearly a quarter of an hour the skirmish was entirely suspended; so that if any traveller had passed that way he might have taken the German corpses as evidence of a previous combat, but would scarcely have imagined that Frenchmen and Germans were watching each other across the little valley. Then came an interruption of a kind which I had not anticipated. M. de Marmorne directed my attention westwards, and I saw

in the air what seemed to be a little white cloud, soon followed by the report of a cannon. The little cloud had a strangely permanent appearance and travelled rather rapidly towards us, getting bigger and bigger; and then we saw the black shell under it, which went over our heads with an awful sound, increasing from a whistle to a scream, and then diminishing again as the projectile flew past us into the wood. A few seconds after it burst with a loud explosion.

"I expected as much," said M. de Marmorne, coolly: "they dare not advance with their artillery on the open road; but they are going to try to shell us out of our position. If their aim does not improve wonderfully, we need not be very apprehensive."

He had scarcely finished speaking when another shell rose in the air, and the little cloud came towards us as before. We heard the scream of the missile, a loud inexpressibly ominous noise like the scream of some evil bird flying just over our heads: but the shell did not strike the Roche des Aiglons; it fell in the wood and exploded there. We heard the crashing of the branches and the violent detonation almost simultaneously.

After that came a little delay, the time being employed by our men in sheltering themselves as well as they could from any shell which might fall upon the rock, yet so as not to lose sight of the road which it was their business to defend. That respite must have been employed in communications from the Prussians opposite us to the artillerymen; for when the bombardment was resumed, the aim was very different. This

time the missile fell upon us like an aerolite from the sky, and burst in the very midst of us, the fragments of iron flying about in all directions. One man was killed on the spot, another lay writhing and moaning in his agony, dreadfully mutilated.

This was my first little experience of a bombardment; and it affected me, for the moment, deeply. I shall remember that torn body as long as I live, and that wretched white face with the cold sweat on the brow, and the wildly-staring eyes. The hands tried to grasp the hard granite, all bloody about the dying man. But there was no time for sentiment on the Roche des Aiglons then. The Prussians had found the right elevation for their guns, and showed us no mercy. Shell after shell dropped unerringly on the crest of the rock, in the very midst of us, till the position became almost too hot for our holding. Notwithstanding the care taken by our *francs-tireurs* to hide themselves, the casualties were beginning to be considerable in proportion to our limited number. One little group was in a hole surrounded by huge blocks of granite; but a too great care for their own safety proved their destruction, for a shell descended in the very midst of them, shattering them all to pieces, and literally cutting them limb from limb.

M. de Marmorne's *francs-tireurs* were not a disciplined body of men, nor was it to be expected that they should endure this for long with the patience of English veterans under a Wellington. The enemy was utterly invisible, a fact which added greatly to the severity of the trial; and it was not at all surprising that our little band

should exhibit symptoms of increasing impatience. The men fired aimlessly at the wood opposite, in direct disobedience to their leader's commands to reserve their ammunition. Then by twos and threes they began to leave the rock, some of them descending the narrow path by which we had climbed it, and thereby exposing themselves to the Prussian riflemen, who picked them off like rooks; others, more prudent or less courageous, crept away into the wood behind us, perhaps with the laudable intention of getting nearer to the enemy, but possibly also with the hope of putting their own persons in a place of comparative safety. The little authority over the band which M. de Marmorne had ever possessed became now a mere illusion; and amidst the crashing of the iron crackers his voice was heard at intervals in tones of expostulation rather than of authority, heeded only by a few. A little group of fifteen or twenty men still kept near him, and amongst these was Jolif the innkeeper, conspicuous in his blue blouse, and probably the coolest and bravest Frenchman there.

"I'm rather apprehensive, sir," he said to M. de Marmorne, "that those Prussians may be trying to get round us in the wood, so as to take the rock in the rear. Now, as I'm not of any particular use here, how would it be if I were just to go by myself and have a look in that direction? I know the forest perfectly, and might possibly bring you news. I don't intend to sneak off, sir: you may trust me for that."

"Take one of those rifles, then, out of the dead men's hands. What is the good of that fowling-piece?"

"Thank you, sir, I think just for the present my old double-barrel is the more suitable weapon of the two; for if I should need to defend myself at all, it will be in the wood, at very close quarters, and a shot-gun is a capital thing for throwing dust into a man's eyes."

"Then take, at least, this little revolver of mine," I said, handing him my weapon.

"That is different, sir, and I will take it with pleasure. It is a pretty little toy, and it might be useful, too, with one of those Prussians at arm's-length."

Jolif disappeared in the wood, and I remained by the side of M. de Marmorne. Our state of suspense was very soon ended by the reopening of the Prussian fire from the opposite wood, which drew our attention in that direction, and probably at the same time prevented us from hearing what was going on in the forest behind us. A few of our men were placed so as to guard the rock on that side, and in about ten minutes they began firing vigorously.

The Prussians were upon us from behind, before Jolif could come back to us with the news. What had become of Jolif himself I had no means of ascertaining. Possibly he might have been killed; or perhaps he had been sharp enough to avoid the enemy, though unable to rejoin M. de Marmorne.

Whatever had been Jolif's fate, it was obvious that we had nothing to do but resist or capitulate, flight being out of the question, as we should have been picked off by the Prussian rifles whilst crossing the open ground below. This time the enemy did not wait long to be

shot at, but advanced boldly and rapidly over the neck of land which joined the Roche des Aiglons to the hill behind it. If we had still been as numerous as we were at the beginning, we might have offered some effectual resistance; but our losses from the shells and our still greater losses from desertion having reduced us to a mere handful, we had little chance of doing any good by fighting. Still the *francs-tireurs* gave the Prussians a hot reception, and many a stout strong fellow from beyond the Rhine rolled down the steep with a bullet in his manly breast.

I have but a confused recollection of the few minutes of hand-to-hand fighting which followed. The enemy charged us with the bayonet; and I recollect M. de Marmorne's tall figure, with a naked sword in one hand and a revolver in the other. At the last moment, I took a rifle from a Frenchman who fell near me, and tried to defend myself, but was soon surrounded and overpowered, though not wounded. In a few minutes such of us as had escaped death were prisoners in the hands of the enemy.

LXV.

We were first marched down to the road, and then to a place where the Prussian general, with a group of field-officers, was seated under a large oak. A Frenchman in a blouse was standing in the open space of green before these officers, and when we halted within a few paces of him I recognised our friend Jolif.

We were just in time to hear sentence passed upon him. The president of the court-martial, thus hastily improvised, addressed him in defective though intelligible French.

"You are simply a civilian, and you have been taken with arms in your hands, lying in wait for our soldiers. We will not tolerate this conduct in the civil population, and consequently you are condemned to death."

Jolif did not quail an instant before the severe countenance of the Prussian officer, but heard his fate with an air of supreme contempt. Looking coolly around him, his eye rested on me, and he addressed me in a clear voice.

"Monsieur Segrave, from what I hear, it seems that these Prussian rascals are going to make a target of me. May I ask you to be so good as to convey the news to my wife as gently as you can?"

The same face which had looked so scornfully contemptuous a moment before, now wore an expression of the tenderest pity and regret, and the eyes filled with tears. He spoke again, but this time the voice was broken and husky.

"Tell her that she was always a good wife to me, and that if ever I have used, in haste, an unkind word to her, I ask her pardon."

I could only nod in answer to this, being too much overcome myself to utter a single word.

Jolif's appeal to me directed the attention of the officers to my humble person. "Who is that other fellow without a uniform?" asked the general.

I was brought up before him at once, and reflected that the best way would be to insist as much as possible on my English nationality. So I answered in my own language. "I am an English gentleman, staying in this part of the country with my friends."

One of the officers understood English, and said with a sneer, "A newspaper correspondent, I suppose?"

"No."

"Then what the devil are you doing here?"

"I was staying with friends here when the war broke out, and have not left them since."

"So you thought you would see a little fighting, eh?"

"Yes."

"This may end badly for you. If you were armed, you shall be shot like that French peasant there; but if not, you shall be kept a prisoner till further orders." Then turning to the men who guarded me, the officer asked in German if I was armed when they caught me. Luckily the soldier answered "No."

"Search him. He may have arms about his person."

Happily for me, the little revolver, the only weapon which belonged to me, was no longer in my possession: so I got through the ordeal very well.

M. de Marmorne was next brought forward, and a conversation ensued amongst the officers, but too rapid for me to understand it.

"We have heard of you already," said one of them in French. "Your reputation has reached us. You are not a soldier, though dressed in a pretty fancy uniform;

but you are the ringleader of a set of brigands who call themselves the Children of the Forest."

Never, so long as I live, shall I forget my kind friend's aspect and bearing at that moment. Plain as his face was, plain almost to ugliness, the nobility of an entirely noble nature glowed through it and animated it. The black bushy eyebrows were contracted into a frown; and the dark eyes flashed fire, as he answered with perfect clearness—

"Your language is both discourteous and inaccurate. I am not a leader of brigands, as you are perfectly well aware. I am a French gentleman, and the men under me were my tenants and my neighbours, in arms for the defence of their native land."

"We recognise none but regular troops. Do you belong to any French regiment, acting with the regular French army, under the command of a general?

"No, I do not."

"Exactly so; and consequently you have no claim to benefit by the laws and customs of civilised warfare. If we hung you to the branch of this tree, you would deserve no better fate."

"Is not this the man," inquired another officer, "by whose orders two of our Uhlans were murdered in the wood?"

"He gave no such orders," I interposed, without hesitation. "He received your Uhlans kindly, and was not aware that anything had befallen them until after the event."

My interposition was unnoticed. The officers looked

very grave, and said a few words to each other in German, which I did not catch. Then came the fatal sentence.

"Take him away with the peasant."

After that an inquiry was made about other *francs-tireurs*, the answer being that all, except two, were wounded—that is, all the survivors of the little remnant who had remained faithful to M. de Marmorne.

"Very well, keep them close prisoners: we do not execute wounded men. As for the two who are not wounded, they may be shot as civilians taken with arms in their hands. It is necessary to make an example of these *francs-tireurs*."

LXVI.

M. de Marmorne heard his sentence with composure, requesting simply to be allowed a minute's private conversation with me. This request was granted, and he whispered in my ear: "You will probably find a good opportunity for escaping, either to-day or in the course of the night. Watch carefully for it, and make use of it when it occurs. You are young, but prudent; I beg you to remain within a short distance of La Creuse until the war is over, and to be a friend to my daughter Ada till your brother comes back. She will need your assistance. Give my fatherly love and blessing to each of my daughters with these little things."

Here he took out his watch, purse, keys, and pocket-book. He also opened the clothing about his chest, and took a large flat gold locket, which he opened. It

contained a painted miniature of his wife, on one side, and on the other a lock of her hair intertwined with his own. He looked at the portrait with a painful intensity, as if desiring to engrave the miniature in his memory for the short time he had to live; and then, having closed the locket, handed it to me. He wore a signet-ring, with his arms engraved upon it, and begged me to accept this as a *souvenir*, with an exquisite grace and courtesy. He reserved one thing for himself; a little crucifix, the cross in ebony, with the image of the dying Christ in silver. Then he kissed me on both cheeks, and I him; and all communication between us ceased in this world for ever.

The four condemned men were then marched rapidly down into the space of level ground, where the pasture was green by the little stream. I could not turn my eyes away from them. More than ten times their number had been slain in my sight that morning with comparatively little effect upon my feelings; but this "execution of civilians taken with arms in their hands" appeared to me little else than deliberate murder. Besides, I had learned to love M. de Marmorne in months of pleasant intercourse with him; and I deeply respected the simplicity and manliness of his character. Even Jolif, little as I had seen of him, had won a place in my esteem as a brave and honest fellow, so that I was by no means indifferent to his fate.

My heart beat violently when the victims were placed in order, about ten paces apart, and a firing-party was told off and rapidly marched opposite to them, then

brought to a halt, and formed in line, four deep. The Frenchmen refused to have their eyes bandaged when their hands were fastened behind their backs. I was not near enough to distinguish the features, but could recognise M. de Marmorne as he knelt down on the grass, with Jolif in the blue blouse at his right hand, the two *francs-tireurs* being on the other side. There was a moment of inconceivably terrible expectation, during which I began to feel sick and faint; and then a simultaneous volley from the Prussian needle-guns, followed by a second and third discharge before the smoke had cleared away. When it did clear, the blue blouse and the three grey uniforms were lying on the grass, all motionless.

LXVII.

I saw no more; for the Prussian force now resumed its march, the artillery passing the Roche des Aiglons in safety, and with an accelerated rapidity to make up for lost time. I was placed between two infantry men, who hurried me along so quickly that it was as much as I could do for the present to pay attention to my steps on the rough blocks of stone which formed the old Roman road, and the intervals of gravel between them, ravined by little water-courses from the hill. Escape seemed utterly out of the question; but I quietly determined to watch for an opportunity, which would probably occur before night, or perhaps during the night. I therefore kept as much as possible from yielding to feelings of despondency, and occupied my mind with re-

flections about those dearest to me, in which Julius and the ladies at La Creuse had the chief place. The possibility that he might be in some situation resembling my own suggested itself with increasing force now that I felt in my own person the restraint and helplessness of captivity. The extreme difficulty of communication caused by the war, was both an anxiety and a consolation to me: an anxiety, because I reflected how unlikely it was that we should get news of Julius; and a consolation, because it did not follow that the absence of news was any evidence of his death, or even of injury or disease. The interpretation of events which best coincided with my own feelings, and which might be perfectly well supposed to harmonise with the circumstances of that troubled time, was that Julius had been detained by one army or the other as a prisoner, or at least temporarily hindered in the prosecution of his journey.

Our own skirmish with the Prussians had so occupied our attention and our ears, that I had heard neither small-arms nor cannonading in the direction of Marmorne; but now I heard it plainly enough. It was useless to ask questions of my keepers—useless, because they would have told me nothing—and unnecessary, because I now comprehended the scheme of the enemy's attack as clearly as if it had been explained to me. M. de Marmorne and Jolif had guessed rightly: the Prussians were trying to nip Marmorne between two forces; but their success had been imperilled by one thing—the approach by the old Roman road was no longer a surprise after the sufficiently noisy little bombardment of

the Roche des Aiglons, which, though the guns used were of small calibre, could be heard at a considerable distance. So much in time of war does the anxiety of the immediate future predominate over the sorrows of even the most recent past, that my mind wandered from poor M. de Marmorne to his chateau, and from Jolif to the Trois Chênes; and I pictured to myself the combat which had already commenced about those familiar localities.

I was glad that the Prussian officers had not asked for my parole, as it left me free to take the first opportunity of escaping. When we were nearly out of the wood, I was sent quite to the rear, to be guarded with the wounded *francs-tireurs*, who were also prisoners, and who were kept close to the Prussians wounded in the skirmish. We came to a halt in an open place near the road, awaiting further orders; and the rest of the German force went forward rapidly to the Trois Chênes.

It is hardly possible to imagine a situation more tantalising than that in which I now found myself. We were in one of those gullies common in the narrow valleys about Marmorne—pleasant little nooks in summer, where a picnic-party may lunch without fear of observation, but so situated that, when you are fairly inside them, you can see hardly anything but the sky, and not very much of that. Here we remained all day; and during the whole of the time my nerves were kept in a constant state of tension and excitement by the incessant noise of a combat going on at Marmorne, whilst I could not gain the least information as to its progress, or the

chances of success for one side or the other. The sights and sounds in my own immediate vicinity were anything but cheerful and encouraging. My captors allowed me no communication with my companions in misfortune, and replied to one or two questions I addressed to them with a sullen shake of the head; but I was near enough to the wounded to hear their groans, and five deaths occurred within thirty yards of me in the course of the afternoon. I had a sufficient allowance of food to keep me from starving; but was far too carefully watched for any possibility of escape.

After four o'clock, the leaden sky became darker and darker; but it ceased to reverberate the noise of the rifles and the rumbling thunder of the cannonade. Wearied by the excitement of the last twenty-four hours, I fell asleep on the stony ground where I was, and might have remained there for a long time, had not one of the soldiers poked at me with the butt of his rifle, and ordered me to get up and march. By the time I was really awake, we were out on the highroad and marching toward Marmorne, which of course led me to the conclusion that the Prussians had occupied the village.

During my residence at Boisvipère, my visits to our hospitable friend at Marmorne had been so frequent that the place had become as familiar to me as the most familiar villages about Segrave Park, in Yorkshire. The people at Marmorne all knew me personally, never failing to take off their hats to me when we met. They were a naturally civil population, and all the more loyal

to the local aristocracy that it had been so well represented by M. de Marmorne. I, on my part, knew most of the villagers, and liked them as a decent and respectable set of people, who well deserved the modest prosperity which had rewarded them. Until that unhappy war, it would have been difficult to find a nook more apparently exempt from trouble and misfortune. People fell ill and died there, as the inscriptions in the little cemetery testified, nor did they invariably attain to threescore years and ten; yet, in spite of these common evidences of mortality, a poet might have chosen Marmorne for the scene of some delicately-finished rustic idyl. I remember it still, as it used to be in the early summer, with the large, creamy-white cattle enjoying the rich green pastures in the hollows between the graceful waves of land, or standing in groups that would have delighted a painter, under the shade of enormous old chestnut-trees. I remember it as it used to be in the warm evenings of harvest-time, under the golden harvest moon, when the heavily-laden wains were brought to the barns; the men and the maidens singing some ancient song with strangely melancholy cadences, the young people ending the long day's labour with dances lasting far into the night. More vividly still do I remember that dreadful night of November, in the *Année Terrible*, when I was taken as a prisoner into Marmorne, between two Prussian soldiers stern as fate and silent as their steel.

First I saw the inn of Les Trois Chênes, lighted from within by the lurid glare of a fire which had been burning for hours, and was now glowing like a red furnace

on the ground-floor, the roof having fallen in some time previously. I thought of poor Jolif's wife, in her retreat amongst the hills, sitting anxiously, no doubt, and thinking of her husband and their home. As we approached the village, the signs of the recent combat became more frequent. Dead horses were scattered about the road; and some Garibaldian cavalry men, in their picturesque theatrical uniform, were lying in the strange attitudes of men slain suddenly, with the feathers of their bonnets in the dust. Farther on, the corpses were more numerous, and the first houses were burning, like the Trois Chênes. There had evidently been a sharp struggle in the street of the village itself; and I noticed, with especial regret, a number of peasants amongst the dead, who had been bayoneted at their own doors—a consequence, very probably, of the *franc-tireur* movement in the place, and of Jolif's capture at the Roche des Aiglons. The houses were partly destroyed, but not entirely. Those which remained were already occupied by Prussian soldiers, billeted regularly, in the methodical manner of a highly-disciplined army; and preparing their evening meal, or cleaning their accoutrements, as unconcernedly as if they had just arrived at a halting-place after the fatigues of an ordinary march. The village had been entirely evacuated by the Garibaldians, who had retreated I knew not whither. I had not time to observe much, nor the least opportunity of speaking to anybody I knew, being marched along, with my companions in misfortune, straight to the chateau of my unfortunate friend, M. de Marmorne.

LXVIII.

The best rooms in the house were occupied by the German officers, who were dining at the time of my arrival. The wounded *francs-tireurs* were stowed away in one of the out-buildings, and I myself was put into a harness-room in the courtyard, where I remained in solitary confinement with a big sentinel at the door, who took good care that I should have no opportunity of escaping.

At the end of what seemed to be two hours (I had not light enough to look at my watch), the sentinel was relieved, and his successor briefly ordered me to follow him.

I was conducted directly into the presence of the German officers, who were now in the great *salon*, which was full of the smoke from their cigars. There were enough of them to occupy every chair and sofa in the room. What a change from the quiet evenings I had so often passed there with M. de Marmorne and Ada and Abeille! what a change from that first pleasant evening when Abeille had so pleased her father by understanding my English, and answering it in that sweet defective English of her own, so much more charming than the most perfect idiom that ever won the approbation of a critical and accomplished linguist! I remembered every detail of that first evening, the pale tea that Abeille handed me in the thin cup of antique Chinese porcelain, and her old father's playful talk. How full of peace and dignity and repose the room

had seemed to me then, with the grave and serious colour of its walls, and the wide spaces of margin about the living figures, in their graceful, light, modern dress! Which of us at that time dreamed of invasion? which of us imagined that a time was at hand when that room would be filled with the officers of a hostile army, and that the perfume of Ada's flowers would be replaced by a thick cloud of German tobacco?

My mind was possessed by these recollections when I found myself face to face with the officer who had spoken English to me at the Roche des Aiglons. He was sitting just in Ada's favourite place, and his light hair was relieved against an ebony cabinet behind him—the cabinet where Ada kept her precious things, such as the manuscript of the "Livre des Cent Ballades." He did not invite me to sit down, nor did he rise himself; but he fixed his clear, penetrating, blue eyes upon me for a minute in perfect silence, and then said in English—

"You might be able to give us some useful information as you are not a Frenchman, and I think you owe us as much in return for our clemency to you."

"Do you wish me to turn informer against my friends?"

"Not exactly; but you might tell us something that we want to know about the topography of the neighbourhood. There is a place on the hills near here called Boisvipère. Do you know anything about it?"

"It must be a wood, I suppose."

"Buildings are marked there on the French ordnance

map, and it looks like a village. We are under the impression that it is now occupied by the Garibaldians who retreated from this place, or by some portion of them. Have you ever been there?"

I am so utterly unaccustomed to telling downright falsehoods, that I answered simply, "Yes."

Other questions would no doubt have followed, had not a remarkable interruption put a sudden stop to this *interrogatoire*. A Prussian *estafette*, in the full costume of an Uhlan, suddenly entered the apartment, and after making the military salute, went straight to the commanding officer, who was standing with his back to the fire, and enjoying a cup of coffee with as complete an appearance of being perfectly at home as if the room had been in his own house in Germany, and the officers his guests at a military dinner-party. The *estafette* handed a little note to the general, and then retired three or four paces backwards, where he stood in the attitude of attention, his eyes fixed, as if awaiting a command.

All conversation ceased instantaneously, and every eye in the room studied the general's countenance, in order at least to ascertain whether the news were of an agreeable nature or the contrary. We were not kept long in suspense. The vigorous old officer, who was probably not much accustomed to conceal his emotions, flung the paper into the fire with an oath, and his cigar after it, stamping the red embers with his boot-heel till the sparks flew in every direction. When he turned round again, there was an expression of intense vexation

on his countenance, and he uttered half-a-dozen words in German, which produced a most remarkable effect upon his hearers.

Every officer present sprang to his feet in an instant, and before I had time to wonder what was the matter, the room was completely evacuated.

In their hurry, they had forgotten me, and I did not care to remind them of my humble and unworthy self, by following too closely on their heels. I preferred, on the contrary, a little expedient suggested by recollections of childish pastimes. The windows being adorned with heavy cloth curtains, I slipped behind the nearest, in case any one should come back again, and find me in the middle of the room, too conspicuously alone. Nobody came, however, so I quietly opened the window a couple of inches and listened intently.

The cool night-breeze fanned my temples, and soon brought me the sounds which indicate the movement of a military force. I could hear, although the *salon* was on the opposite side of the building, the trampling of hoofs on the stones of the courtyard, with sharp, brief, words of command, then the rumbling of wheels on the road beyond, as if the artillery and the waggons were already in motion, and finally the confused noise of troops moving in a body.

I could easily have escaped into the garden through the open window, but felt safer for the present where I was. I remained more than an hour in that position when my solitude was broken in upon by a visitor. My ears informed me that somebody was opening the door,

and curiosity impelled me to look between the curtains, and see who the visitor could be. It was a man in the black *soutane* of an ecclesiastic, whom I at once recognised as the *curé* of the village of Marmorne.

He looked round the room, still lighted by the candles which the officers had left burning, and seeing no one, was going away again, when I stepped out of my hiding-place.

"*Monsieur le curé*," I said, "perhaps you were seeking for me?"

He started, and said I was right in my conjecture, and that he was glad to see me, having been informed that I was a prisoner. "The Prussians," he continued. "have most suddenly and unexpectedly evacuated Marmorne altogether. There is not one of them left in the village. Even the wounded and the dying were removed in their ambulance-waggons. The dead are left, and that is all."

"Where are the Garibaldians?"

"When they found that they could hold the village no longer, they escaped into the woods. Many of them appear to have gone in the direction of Boisvipère. They are scattered about for the present."

"I am anxious to get to La Creuse," I said, "as soon as possible, to see Mesdemoiselles de Marmorne. I have dreadful news to communicate."

"Their father's death? I am aware of that already. The whole sad story has been told me by a wounded *franc-tireur* here. But it is not safe for you to go on the forest roads before daylight. The Garibaldians are

excited with bloodshed and irritated by defeat. It is really dangerous to meet groups of them now in a lonely place at night, especially if you are unprovided with their password. When soldiers of that kind are excited, the rifles almost go off of themselves. I have seen them firing in mere wantonness; besides, the news you have to communicate is so terrible, that anxiety, bad as that may be, is preferable to it. You must be weary after the fatigues of the last two days, and will need rest. Are you not hungry too? Have you had any dinner?"

I had not thought about either hunger or fatigue; but now that these weaknesses of the body were alluded to, I became suddenly conscious of both. The priest's arguments, too, were evidently reasonable; and it was plain that my wisest course was to remain at Marmorne until the following morning, but I felt it impossible to take rest or food until I had news of my servant Perrin.

"He is safe," said the *curé*, "and seeking for you at this minute. He is looking through the upper rooms of the house. As for me, I must go now and attend to the wounded. You would be welcome to anything in my little house; but my supplies are always very limited, and now they are entirely exhausted, as the Garibaldians have eaten up every particle of food I had, and drunk every drop of wine. There is a chance that you may find something to eat in this chateau, but it is doubtful after two military occupations. Even a small army eats up a country like a flight of locusts."

Perrin soon rejoined me, and the priest went to his

duties with the wounded. My servant had been employed in the ambulance all day, and to this he probably owed his escape from the dangers of the combat. Had he gone with us to the Roche des Aiglons, he would probably have shared the fate of the unfortunate innkeeper Jolif.

LXIX

Thanks to Perrin's activity, some remnants of food were got together, and I ate the most melancholy meal I had ever sat down to in the hospitable house of Marmorne. Having satisfied my hunger, the next thing was to get a little rest; and I went to the bedroom which had always been my own on my frequent visits. It remained just the same, except some temporary disorder, caused by its last Garibaldian occupant, which Perrin rapidly set to rights. I lay awake for more than an hour, excited and affected by the terrible scenes of the preceding day, and mentally tortured by the prospect of the inevitable morning when I should have to bear evil tidings to Ada and Abeille. At last, before I was aware of it, came the beneficent oblivion of sleep.

We reached Boisvipère at daylight, and found the chateau full of Garibaldians. Emil received me in his own room. He knew nothing as yet of the skirmish at the Roche des Aiglons or its consequences; and on hearing the news he expressed no sorrow, or even regret, about M. de Marmorne's death, but simply blamed his "folly." "What business had the old man to set up

that company of sharp-shooters? What was the use of them? What imaginable good could they do? It was amateur soldiering of the most rash and dangerous description, which could only irritate the enemy without stopping him." Then turning from M. de Marmorne, as if the old gentleman, being dead, *manquait d'actualité*, he immediately began to complain of his own troubles, saying, "What an annoyance it was to have Boisvipère occupied by those impudent Garibaldians, who behaved exactly as if the place belonged to them!" A curious commentary on this assertion was afforded the very next minute when some one knocked at the door. "Entrez!" cried Emil, imperatively, as if the applicant had been a clerk in his office in London.

The new-comer was a magnificent-looking Italian officer, of almost gigantic stature, evidently a gentleman of rank, whose well-built muscular figure was shown to great advantage in the picturesque Garibaldian dress. He spoke little French, and what he did speak was marked by a strong Italian accent, yet it was intelligible, and made agreeable by perfectly noble manners.

"Our horses," he said, "are inconveniently crowded in the stables, and I have just learned that there is another stable which is empty, and kept locked. Would there be any objection to our using it?"

Emil appeared to be quite startled at this request, and an expression of mingled anxiety and displeasure overshadowed his countenance as he answered curtly, "There are some things of mine in that stable, and I cannot give you the key." The officer appeared to be

wounded in his dignity by Emil's manner, which was entirely wanting in the forms of Continental courtesy; but the only answer he gave was a glance of surprise and a very formal bow, after which he immediately left the room.

"There, you see," said my brother, "how pleasant it is to have those fellows in one's house! They are never satisfied. I would as willingly have the Prussians."

I thought that, considering the risks the Garibaldians were incurring for the defence of a country in which Emil had a stake, he might have spoken about them rather more sympathetically; but it was not the fashion to like the Garibaldians in France. I had neither time nor inclination to discuss these matters with my brother, but took leave of him, and went forward on my melancholy mission to La Creuse.

The little chalet was like a picture of peace after the scenes I had lately witnessed. The pale November sun had pierced the grey veil of cloud, and was now shining upon it almost cheerfully. The fresh pine-wood of the chalet, which had not yet been painted, was quite brilliant in the morning light, and gave an answering trail of reflection in the water. Even the November woods in their grey and russet looked beautiful enough for a picture, and the more so that a slight mist rose from the lake and gave something of the poetry of distance to the rocks and trees upon its shore. A wreath of pale-blue smoke ascended from the single chimney of the little building, as if to show that it was not merely placed there for ornament, but had well-founded pretensions to undeniable utility.

Is there any situation in life more deserving of commiseration than that of a bearer of evil tidings? There is a tradition that such were slain by barbarous kings, whereas the bringers of good news were rewarded with purses of gold. But whatever may be the unpleasantness of bringing bad news to a hearer for whose feelings you have only an ordinary degree of sympathy, it is as nothing in comparison with the incomparably more terrible task of inflicting a blow on those you love. And my feelings, both towards Ada and towards Abeille, were by this time anything but feelings of indifference. I had accustomed myself to look upon Ada as the promised wife of Julius, and my affection for him and for her had anticipated events so far as to make her already my sister. For Abeille I was beginning to be aware of a still warmer and closer attachment, scarcely acknowledged hitherto in the depths of my own secret consciousness. Her exquisite simplicity had charmed me from the very beginning; and even her ignorance of the world, her absolute forgetfulness of self, had won my trust and faith far more surely than any feminine craft or subtlety could have done. I had never been very susceptible of impressions, such as many of our sex very frequently receive from the natural attractiveness of the other. I had not looked forward to marriage as part of my plans in life; and as a younger son, had not been much plotted against by English mothers and daughters. Having been intended for the priesthood in my youth, I had accustomed myself to the idea of celibacy; whilst our friends and acquaintances had asso-

ciated that idea with their general bundle of notions about me and my prospects. After completely abandoning the intention of becoming an ecclesiastic, I had not so completely disembarrassed myself of former habits of thinking.

But to return to the chalet, from which we have been led away by this digression. I had left Perrin behind at Boisvipère, preferring to be alone on a melancholy mission of this kind; but I did not arrive alone at the end of my journey. The solitude of the woodland path was broken by a single figure, which seemed to hesitate an instant, and then came rapidly towards me.

It was Abeille.

"We have been very anxious," she said. "I see you are safe. We sent our gardener to Marmorne last night; but he could not get into the village, because it was occupied by the Prussians. Is my father at Marmorne? Is he safe?"

She looked earnestly in my face, and before I could invent a stammering falsehood saw clearly that something was wrong.

"Tell me—tell me. I see you have bad news!"

"M. de Marmorne, I am sorry to say, is wounded. He is wounded in the arm."

"Oh, my poor father—my poor, kind father! I will go at once to nurse him. Take me with you just now—take me to him!"

"We must tell Mademoiselle Ada first."

"Yes — well — come and let us tell her! She will come too;" and Abeille set off walking at a quick pace

towards the chalet. Then she stopped suddenly as it struck by a new idea. Looking up in my face, she asked me if the wound was slight or severe.

"Severe. M. de Marmorne is, I grieve to say, very severely wounded."

"Will amputation be necessary?" she asked, turning very pale.

"I fear so."

Abeille then fixed her eyes on my face as she had never done before; the bashful eyes that hardly ever showed themselves except under the sheltering fringe of her long eyelashes. I could not bear that searching look, and partially turned away.

"You have not told me the whole truth! This suspense is more than I can bear. Have pity on me, and tell me the worst at once!"

She trembled from head to foot, and I said, "Your father is to be envied and not pitied. He lies dead on the field of honour!"

She threw both arms wildly into the air, and uttered a cry of pain as if I had stabbed her with a dagger. Then she looked to right and left, as if seeking for something to cling to, and finally laid both hands on my shoulders and her head upon my breast. There she remained, sobbing violently; all the rules and conventionalisms of her nation and her rank forgotten in the supreme reality of grief.

I, too, forgot the rules of polite society; for I folded my arms about her, and kissed her forehead and her eyes.

After remaining so for about a minute, Abeille sud-

denly disengaged herself, and we went to the chalet together.

The effect of the news on Ada was altogether different. Abeille told her of M. de Marmorne's death in my presence, and without preparation of any kind. Ada did not shed one tear: indeed so little did she seem to realise the news that we repeated it under the impression that we had not been understood. Here we were mistaken; she had perfectly understood us: but the hours of anxiety since I left the chalet had produced the usual effect of anxiety upon her peculiar temperament—the benumbing, deadening effect which made her apparently insensible to the hardest blows of Fate. Her manner with us seemed to express a state of feeling which, had it been uttered in words, would have taken a shape like this. "You tell me my father is dead; well, what can I do about it? I cannot bring him to life again, can I? Consequently, there is nothing left for me but to support patiently a state of things which has come about independently of my will."

Abeille and I were both far more painfully affected by this than we should have been by a more lively and poignant sorrow. We had already experienced the extreme difficulty of dealing with Ada's peculiar mental state; and yet we both felt the urgent necessity of a remedy. After having been cheered by a partial recovery, this relapse threw us back into an anxiety akin to hopelessness. One effect of it on Abeille was, however, not unfavourable. It diverted her attention from her own sorrow by compelling her to think only of Ada.

LXX.

The occupation of Boisvipère by the Garibaldians was nothing but a temporary retreat. They had no reason for remaining in such an out-of-the-way place; and as soon as it became evident that the Prussians had evacuated Marmorne, they occupied it again. The ladies might now have gone back to the chateau; but, on the whole, it seemed better that they should remain in the quiet retreat at La Creuse; for the chateau was anything but quiet, being a convenient lodging for the officers, in a place where comfortable quarters were not to be had in abundance. The ladies soon became attached to the little chalet, which they liked for its extreme tranquillity and retirement; and both my brother Emil and I used all our influence to keep them there. Abeille wanted to go to Marmorne to nurse a peasant or two who had suffered more or less severe injuries from Prussian bullets or bayonets; but Ada seemed to require such uninterrupted companionship, that I prevailed upon her to prefer the nearer duty. Ada's condition showed no signs of improvement. She was put into mourning for her father, just as if she had been a child, with the difference that a child would have noticed the change of dress, whilst our unhappy sister took no notice of it. There was a great difficulty in inducing her to take a little exercise for the benefit of her health, not that her physical condition seemed to require any especial care, for she needed no medical treatment. Yet we could not avoid some anxiety about it, as she

led such a very sedentary life. The little household labours were discharged by Gustine under Abeille's superintendence: and Ada sat in the parlour of the chalet close by the window in a little corner she had chosen, silently sewing, or holding a book in her hands, without turning the pages or following the sense. She would come to the table at meal-times, eat and drink sufficiently, and then return to her accustomed seat, always in perfect silence, except when she briefly answered the remarks by which we tried to draw her into conversation. During all the hours that I passed with the young ladies, Ada never shed one tear.

This made us desire more eagerly than ever the return of my brother Julius, which was evidently the only event likely to rouse her from a torpor that threatened gradually to undermine her intelligence and finally reduce her to a condition, not indeed of what is commonly called madness, but of helpless idiocy. If Julius would but come! The mind that had been so dear to us was overshadowed, but it was not yet destroyed. It was still perfectly capable of grasping ideas, and even of connecting them; but it appeared to shrink from the light, both of other people's thinking and of its own. Ada indulged in the vagueness of her present mental life as in the luxury of a "kind nepenthe," and made no effort to rouse herself from the dangerous rest it gave. She was like a drowsy traveller on the snow, who would willingly yield to his weariness, and accept the deathful sleep.

Notwithstanding the incident with Abeille, when a moment of intense emotion had caused us to break

through our usual reserve, it seemed to be tacitly understood by both of us that our intercourse, for the present at least, should be what it had been before, and still there was a new sweetness in it for me—not the less delicious that it was unknown to every one but ourselves, and not avowed even by me to her. Present circumstances were too sad for the indulgence of private felicity; yet I felt that a great good was within my reach, to be enjoyed at a probably not distant future, and this gave me new strength and hope. There was a charm even in the restraint which the state of things imposed upon me; for it prolonged a kind of intercourse which, if not resembling gaiety or what the world calls pleasure, was wonderfully near to happiness. Dreary as were those winter days, and anxious as we were both for public and private reasons, I felt myself so situated that there was a perfect harmony between duty and inclination. I asked no more than to be of use to Ada and her sister, and I knew that I was useful to them both, and might consider myself even necessary; for in the extreme seclusion of their present existence, it was indispensable that they should have some male friend close at hand, whom they thoroughly trusted, and who was perfectly devoted to their interests.

Considering that Emil and I were living under the same roof, we saw singularly little of each other. I had tried the experiment of passing the evenings in his rooms; but although he was just civil, and sometimes almost polite, it was evident that my society gave him little or no pleasure, and was not really desired by him. To put

this to a test, and so settle the question, I said one evening, with an assumed playfulness, "Emil, I am constantly calling upon you, but you never call upon me; so I shall retire into my own apartments, and there await the honour of a visit from the lord of the castle. When you choose to come, you shall have some tea and a cigar; and the mere change of rooms will be a variety in the monotonous life you lead." He said, "Much obliged," with a short laugh, and took up a book.

The next evening I remained in my rooms; but Emil did not come, neither did he send any kind of excuse.

We met at *déjeûner* the day after, for we still had our principal meals together. He made no allusion to his absence, and passed the whole time in reading a newspaper between his mouthfuls,—a bachelor's habit contracted in his chambers in London, but which I thought might have been advantageously discontinued when he was not the only person at table. I tried a few remarks, which he answered in monosyllables, and sometimes did not answer at all.

If the ladies had not been at La Creuse, I should have left Boisvipère at once; but there was no other place where I could lodge within a distance of several miles, and it was evident that I could not live in the chalet itself; so I determined to remain at Boisvipère until Emil positively turned me out, but to have my meals served in my own apartments. Perrin could wait upon me well enough.

Matters remained in this state for several days, during which Emil went twice to La Creuse. He had gone

occasionally before, but not so often as I. On these latter occasions, he had requested Abeille to permit him to speak with Ada alone, on a matter of business, as he said, connected with the succession to the property.

The next incident was this. Migeon knocked at my door one morning about nine o'clock, and brought a message from my brother, who particularly requested to see me in his own rooms. "It is some matter of business," I thought, and went down immediately.

Emil received me gravely, just as if I had been a client to whom he had something serious to communicate. "I have news," he said, "which may be of the utmost importance. An Englishman has been arrested at Chagny, on suspicion of being a spy. It is not at all impossible that it may be Julius, and I want you to go there at once and ascertain. I would have gone myself; but M. de Marmorne's death makes it desirable that I should remain within a very short distance of Mademoiselle Ada as a confidential business adviser."

I hesitated an instant, but only for an instant. It was painful to go to a distance from La Creuse: but my absence would probably not be for very long; and as I considered myself much more anxious for my brother's return than Emil was, I felt sure of prosecuting a search more zealously and effectually than he would be likely to do. Even if the Englishman should turn out to be another person, as was very probable, I might possibly learn something about Julius in the course of the proposed expedition. At all events, I felt that the time was come to make some active effort in seeking for

him. We could not remain indefinitely waiting for news that never came.

I walked over to the chalet at once, and announced this new resolution. Abeille received me first, and approved the project, but with an earnest recommendation about my own safety, as it was by no means easy to travel over a tract of country where all public conveyances were interrupted, and which was traversed in one direction or another by frequent movements of troops belonging to both of the hostile armies. Then Ada came in and heard the purpose of my journey. It appeared to have the effect of awakening her for a moment from her apathy, but it was not possible to make her hope for any good result. "If Monsieur Jules had been destined to come here at all," she said, "I know that he would have come on St Elizabeth's Day."

"Something tells me, on the contrary," said Abeille, "that we shall see him again, but how or when I cannot tell; and it is this uncertainty which leads me to encourage Monsieur Adolphe in his mission. The future is very dark; but I feel that he who is lost to us will be found, and this mission may be the means of finding him. My prayers go with you, Monsieur Adolphe; I will pray for you every hour whilst I am awake, and for your lost brother, that he may be brought back to us. Ada will join me, and it will do her good."

LXXI.

"You will take Perrin with you, of course," Emil said to me before I started.

I had not intended to take Perrin, my project having been to get on as I could by hiring conveyances from one village to another. There were several things to be considered in such a peculiarly difficult bit of travelling. If I took my own spring-cart, which was very well adapted for the purpose, and the better of my two horses, I should be independent of hiring, but strictly limited to the powers of one animal, and the distance to Chagny was considerable. On the other hand, by trusting to chance hiring at a time when men and horses were everywhere taken for military service, I might find myself stopped short at some small place, and reduced to mere pedestrianism. After a little reflection, I decided to leave Perrin and my own horses at Boisvipère, and get to Chagny as rapidly as I could by taking advantage of every opportunity. Had the place been within forty miles of us, I should have preferred my own conveyance, but it was a good deal farther than that.

Emil did not seem at all pleased at the idea that Perrin was to be left at Boisvipère; however, I told him to sleep in his usual room, which was close to my own, and to place his services at the disposal of the ladies De Marmorne, if they happened to have any occasion for them.

I took the precaution of getting a passport from M.

Didier, the *maire;* and the Garibaldian colonel in command at Marmorne kindly provided me with a military *laissez-passer*, and a recommendation to the commander at Dijon. There was no difficulty about beginning the journey, as Perrin took me twenty miles in my own conveyance, after which he returned to Boisvipère, and I went forward in a hired carriage.

It would be useless to encumber this narrative with an account of my journey to Chagny. The reader may find excursions just like it, whenever it may please him to study the abundant columns of war-correspondents. I cannot imagine any kind of travelling less to my taste than crossing a tract of country in war-time, and in the depth of winter. The only advantage of it that may be considered obvious, is that, in after-years, such a journey may enable a student of history to read about winter campaigns, such as the celebrated retreat from Russia, or the dreadful winter before Sebastopol, with a more vivid realisation of their miseries; but it may well be doubted whether such an advantage is not too dearly purchased, even at the cost of a fortnight's actual experience. I arrived at Chagny after some hardship and several very vexatious delays, ill with fatigue and anxiety, and not much sustained by anything deserving the name of hope. Two real or supposed spies had been shot the day before. It was, of course, impossible to find out their real names; but I very soon ascertained that neither of them had called himself Segrave, and these culpable or unfortunate men had been believed to be of German nationality. It was true that an Englishman

had been arrested on suspicion; but after a detention of twenty-four hours he had been released. This gave a ray of hope until I learnt his name, which was that of a well-known correspondent to one of the principal English newspapers. The result of my mission was therefore so far purely negative; but as I had begun to make inquiries, I continued them at other places, especially at Dijon, where I spent four days on my return. All this led to nothing, and the mystery of my brother's disappearance was as far from a solution as ever.

A surprising piece of intelligence awaited me on my return to Marmorne. Perrin met me in the village, and respectfully informed me that he had resolved to quit my service. Nothing could have surprised me more. The man had always been an excellent servant; and I may say, without praising myself unduly, that I had been to him the kindest and most considerate of masters, so that the idea of his leaving me had never once suggested itself.

"Well, at any rate, Perrin," I said, "you will not leave this very day. You must give a month's notice. Besides, I cannot imagine why you should think of leaving me at all. You are not going to be a soldier, are you? As the only son of a widow, you are free from military service, and I cannot imagine where you are likely to find a better master. Have I not always been a good friend to you, and to your mother also?"

"That is quite true, sir. I don't expect to find such a master again; but I cannot go back with you to Boisvipère."

"Do you mean to say that you are leaving me without notice?"

"You can take it out of my wages, sir. I cannot go back to Boisvipère."

"Why not? Give me at least a reason. Have you anything to complain of? Has my brother spoken roughly to you?"

"No, sir; I have no complaints to make. Monsieur Emil has always been very civil to me."

It immediately flashed upon my mind that there must have been a quarrel between Perrin and my brother's servant, Joseph Migeon, a man I never liked, as he had an unpleasant expression of countenance and an extremely jealous disposition: but he served my brother well, and Emil had no desire to part with him; indeed I could not help thinking that Emil trusted him rather too far.

"You have had a quarrel with Migeon."

"No, sir, there has been no quarrel between Migeon and me. I don't pretend to say that we are particular friends; but there has been no disputing, for I always kept out of his way. Those that know him best, say he cannot bide to see a young man near his wife; so I never went into his house except on a message from you or Monsieur Emil, and then I just delivered the message and came away again."

"Then what on earth *is* the reason?"

"Please, sir, I must beg to be excused from telling it. There are things that it is better not to talk about."

"I cannot imagine what you mean."

"There are things that may be seen, but not talked about, because it may bring on misfortune."

Perrin looked alarmingly grave as he uttered these mysterious words. After a pause, he asked, with the same gravity, if I were going up to Boisvipère that night. It was already dark; but I knew the road well enough, and having no reason to stay in Marmorne, intended to go at once and communicate the result of the journey to my brother.

When Perrin heard this, he most urgently entreated, finally even supplicating, that I would postpone the drive until daylight. It then occurred to me that there might possibly be marauders about belonging to the Garibaldians, who were not very strictly disciplined; so I yielded to Perrin's entreaties and remained at Marmorne, passing the rest of the evening with the priest, and the night in the bedroom which his kind hospitality offered.

LXXII.

The *curé*, as I have said in an earlier part of this narrative, was a man of more piety than learning—a genuine village priest, belonging strictly to the country by all his sympathies and modes of thought, and as far removed from the ways of the great French cities as the peasants themselves whom he guided and comforted by his ministry. Many things which to an English Catholic appear but harmless superstitions were to him only a little less unquestionable than those doctrines which are supported by the whole authority of the Church. His entire life,

with the exception of a few years in the ecclesiastical seminaries of a very small country town, had been passed with the peasants of Marmorne and the neighbourhood, who probably loved and understood him better than if he had possessed more of that intellectual culture which is the ornament of higher spheres. The reader will therefore not be surprised to hear him talk otherwise than the Fellows of the Royal Society or the Members of the British Association.

One of the first things I told him about, after narrating my fruitless journey, was the recent interview with Perrin, and my regret at losing his services. I also expressed an unsatisfied curiosity about his motives, which were still a complete mystery to me. The *curé* listened with interest, but without the slightest expression of surprise, and when I had done, he said quietly—

"It is natural that the young man should leave your service, under the circumstances."

"I have given him no reason for leaving it."

"Certainly, *you* have given him no reason; but there *are* reasons."

I saw at a glance that the *curé* knew all about it; but as Perrin might possibly have communicated in confession what he chose to keep secret from me, I could not, in delicacy, put a direct question to my ecclesiastical host. I did all that could be done under the circumstances, by assuming an attitude of eager yet respectful attention.

We had just finished a frugal supper; and my host, as if disposed to change the subject, brought out a flagon

of Chartreuse, and filled our two little glasses. Then he drew his rush-bottomed chair nearer to the fire, put on a fresh log, and roused the embers into a blaze.

"Chartreuse is a good *liqueur*," he said, approvingly; "but I have one or two others that you shall taste when you have taken what you like of that. I never buy such things; but people sometimes kindly make me presents of a few bottles, and it is agreeable to be able to offer them to a friend."

I praised the Chartreuse; but this did not seem to be the way to bring back the conversation to Perrin. It was like one of those conversation games, in which the player is required to answer a remark, and bring something into his answer that has nothing whatever to do with the subject of the remark itself.

"These *liqueurs*," I said, "are really excellent, and there seems to be a great variety of them in France. Perrin, who was my servant until to-day, told me that he knew a receipt for making one with the common cheap *eau de vie du pays* and some berries that grow wild in the woods."

"The herbs used by the monks at La Grande Chartreuse grow wild also on the mountains about the monastery; but they use the best brandy they can purchase."

"Perrin had other accomplishments also. He will be a great loss to me."

The *curé* became silent, and gazed steadily at the fire. At last he said, "It is sometimes permitted to departed spirits to revisit the scenes of their former existence on the earth."

"The tradition of the Church," I said, to put myself in unison with my host, "undoubtedly admits the possibility, and even cites instances where this has actually occurred."

"There have been very recent instances; and the most recent that I am acquainted with," said the *curé*, "is that of our poor friend M. de Marmorne."

I could not help starting at this intelligence, announced with the most absolute faith in its reality. "You startle me, Monsieur le Curé. Do you mean to say that any one has seen M. de Marmorne since his death?"

"Perrin has seen him. The disembodied spirit of M. de Marmorne is now haunting Boisvipère and La Creuse. It has appeared to Perrin several times. Migeon and Migeon's wife have both seen it; and the belief is that the spirit is seeking for *you*, and has something to communicate to you."

A gust of wind swept by the priest's house as he said this; and a strange *eerie* feeling crept over me.

"So this is the reason why Perrin dares not return to Boisvipère?"

"Yes; and in spite of all we do, the disquieted spirit reappears. I say daily masses for its repose; but Migeon's wife saw it the night before last, going round and round the belt of wood that surrounds the open space about the chateau."

Even when one has little or no belief in apparitions, it is difficult to resist entirely the contagion of a genuine faith, especially when it is accompanied by a circumstantial narrative. The *eerie* feeling increased when I

heard of the place haunted by this spirit; for that belt of dark wood about the mansion of Boisvipère had always appeared to me one of the most melancholy scenes I had ever beheld. It seemed to shut everything out—to be a barrier against all that gives cheerfulness or variety to human existence, whether in life or landscape, and to be exactly the kind of place that some mournful shade might haunt if it restlessly revisited the gloom of earth and the glimpses of the moon. Something, I knew not what, had hitherto been wanting to complete the character of Boisvipère; but nothing was wanting now; and an involuntary but powerful act of imagination at once set before me the wood that I knew so well, and the pale ghost gliding under its leafless branches, or pausing as if in expectation of some living man who was to receive its awful message.

Rousing myself from this reverie, which had already set my flesh creeping with a too perfect sense of its reality, I asked the *curé* what Emil thought about the ghost. Here, at least, would be a valuable test; for his practical and lawyer-like intellect would be much more likely to resist a superstition than the mind of a country priest.

"Monsieur your brother," replied the *curé*, "quite admits the reality of the apparition, which he has seen more than once through the windows of the chateau; but, strange to say, he does not believe it to be M. de Marmorne."

"Who else can it be?"

"Monsieur Emil is of opinion that the apparition is more probably that of your unfortunate brother, Monsieur Jules."

"Have you received news of his death during my absence?" I asked with sudden and intense anxiety.

"No positive information of any kind whatever has reached us: but Monsieur Emil now believes that he is no longer living, on account of the absence of news; and he considers this apparition to be a confirmation of his fears."

Something grated on my feelings here. Could it be possible that Emil really believed in the ghost—he who was generally so very cool and sceptical, so very ready to sneer at the supernatural beliefs of others and at everything that could not be proved by what lawyers consider evidence? Then again was he not prematurely ready to accept the idea of my brother's death? Nothing as yet proved that Julius was dead, though we were becoming daily more anxious about his fate.

LXXIII.

I returned to Boisvipère early in the morning, and went straight to my brother's rooms.

"Any news?" he asked with some appearance of eagerness.

I told him in a few words the result of my journey, and then added, "But it is you who have news to tell. What about the ghost?"

I fixed my eyes on Emil as I said this to watch the

effect of a sudden allusion to this subject. He returned my gaze with an appearance of great seriousness, paused half a minute without replying, and then said, in a low tone—

"I perceive that you have already been informed about this subject, and I think that perhaps the less we talk about it the better."

"Do you mean to tell me, Emil, that a man of your sound practical common-sense really puts faith in such a story?"

"I was as sceptical as you can be a fortnight since, but within the last few days I have seen *that* which is enough to shake the scepticism of any man. It may be a mere hallucination; but you must admit that, on such a supposition, it is a most remarkable coincidence which makes four persons share the same hallucination precisely at the same time. You know that your man Perrin has left Boisvipère in consequence of what he has seen. Migeon and his wife have seen it also."

"And is Migeon going to leave too?"

"I have persuaded him to remain because he and his wife are both almost indispensable to me, but you will not easily tempt him out of his own house after dark."

"But what did *you* see? Tell me."

"That which I shall remember to my dying day."

"The *curé* tells me you believe the apparition to be my brother Julius. Have you any reasons for supposing such a thing?"

"I have."

"I wish you would tell me your reasons."

"I will not answer any more questions on the subject. Remember it was you, and not I, who introduced it. I have told no one about it willingly. The *curé* asked me some questions which I answered from respect to his ecclesiastical character, but now I desire to let the subject drop. To return to Julius, have you still, after your fruitless journey, any hope that he can be alive?"

"I see no reason for abandoning hope entirely."

"I confess," replied Emil, with a grave face, "that in my mind no vestige of hope remains."

"What does Ada de Marmorne think?"

"I have been to see the ladies several times during your absence. They are not much more hopeful than I. The news of your failure will extinguish whatever hope remained in Ada's breast. Mademoiselle Abeille may possibly have a different view: she bears up better, being younger and more inclined to cherish agreeable illusions."

I went to the chalet at once and told the history of my fruitless quest. Ada listened to the end and said nothing for some time, but her features fixed themselves into an expression that troubled me greatly.

"We may yet have news of him," I added; "and must not despair."

Still she said nothing.

"Ada!" I said, "my dear sister Ada, speak to me, and tell me all your thoughts, all your apprehensions. That look of yours gives me keener pain than anything

you can say in words. What have I done that you will not speak to me now as you did in the happier past times when you treated me as a brother?"

"What would you have me say? The past is dead for ever. My father is dead, my well-beloved—*mon bien-aimé*—is dead, and all my hopes are dead. I know what you are thinking, you and Abeille, both of you. You think that my mind is dying, dying before my body; and it may be so. But, however weak my intellect may have become, I am still intelligent enough to see through your flimsy attempts to deceive me with hopes that neither of you really feels. I am sick of living with Abeille; she tires me to death with her system of treatment for my shattered mind. She is always coaxing and encouraging me, and making me the subject of minute daily observation, and careful scientific experiments, with a view to what she calls 'rousing me.' Do you think I want rousing? Do you suppose I cannot see things as clearly as either of you, clever as you believe yourselves to be? I know that my father is killed—am I mistaken there? I know that my country lies prostrate under the heel of a relentless enemy—am I right or wrong? I know that your brother Julius is dead—well, if he is alive, bring him to me or bring news of him! And let me seriously ask you, once for all, to torture me no more with your vain attempts at rekindling the fire of a hope that is gone out, and let me beg you not to tease me with your little experiments on my shattered intellect. I will tell you the truth about that also if you like. My mind has much to bear, and it is possible that I am just

quietly going mad. If it is to be madness, I prefer the quiet kind, not wishing to be harmful or dangerous to any one. So I ask just this of you—let me alone. Permit me to suffer in silence. Life is not very cheerful or sweet to me. Why should I be compelled to talk to you, or to any one else about it?"

Abeille and I looked at each other in sorrowful amazement. We had often tried to make Ada talk, and now she had opened her lips to some purpose. One thing pleased me in her speech, namely, the mental robustness of it—good evidence, I thought, that the brain was not permanently weakened; but, on the other hand, both Abeille and I were much distressed by its terrible coldness and hardness — by the utter absence of anything resembling an affectionate sentiment towards ourselves. Ada, in fact, now seemed to look upon us as Lord Byron did upon the doctors who were sent to watch for evidence that he was insane. For a moment I knew not what to say; but a little reflection convinced me that the best thing to preserve her from that fatal apathy which was evidently her greatest danger would be a little plain-spoken opposition. It is not very easy for a man to set himself openly against a woman; for he cannot help being rude in doing so, and if he is rude, what becomes of his gentlemanliness, or even his manliness, according to the usual estimate of these qualities? But however this might be, the present purpose was to keep alive the activity of Ada's intellect, even though it should be directed against ourselves.

"Mademoiselle de Marmorne," I said, with as much

severity as I could compel myself to assume towards a lady, "you are both unkind and unjust to those who love you better than any one loves you, except my brother Julius. You have no right to resent our efforts to make you share a hope which still survives in our own minds notwithstanding all the appearances that go against it. I do myself firmly believe that Julius is alive, and your sister believes it as I do. It is therefore perfectly natural that we should endeavour to make you share a conviction which would enable you to bear up against the trials of the present. And now since it is you who have first spoken about your mental state, I will speak of it also. It is true that you are no longer as you were formerly. The change may not be agreeable to yourself: it is certainly not agreeable to your friends. I think we have some claim upon your consideration, and a right to expect that you should think a little for us as we concern ourselves about you. Our existence, just at present, is not much gayer or merrier than your own. You are not the only person who has suffered affliction and anxiety in consequence of recent events. M. de Marmorne was not my father, but he was my kindest friend."

Here Ada slightly shrugged her shoulders, and asked if my loss in him were at all comparable to her own.

"I do not say that it is, but Mademoiselle Abeille has lost as much in him as you have."

"That is not true. Abeille is a mere child, and does not realise her loss. She is as cheerful as if nothing had happened."

Abeille looked hurt and astonished, but said nothing; so I took upon myself to answer.

"She has probably made an effort to appear cheerful, in order that you might not fall into complete despondency."

"If that is the case, she is a clever actress. I dislike actresses in private life."

This was said with that cruel hardness which had pained us already in Ada's longer speech. The strain and tension of her affections, in recent trials, had rendered them incapable of healthy action, or of any action. Just at present, Ada was incapable of affection, and therefore quite incapable of appreciating the tenderness and loving care of others. The condition of her mind had isolated her to such a degree that, although we were both entirely devoted to her, she lived, so far as her own feelings were concerned, in a state of the most fearful solitude.

Solitude? Well, so it seemed to me just then; but subsequent events have proved that she was not quite so solitary as I had imagined. My brother Emil—with a tact as far surpassing my simple devices as the ruses of a great artist surpass the obvious little artifices of an amateur—my brother Emil, who knew men, and women too, a thousand times better than I did, and delighted in the exercise of his knowledge and his skill—had employed the fortnight of my absence in playing upon Ada's mind after his own consummate fashion. Instead of opposing the idea that Julius was dead, he had quietly, yet effectually, encouraged it. But his labours

had not been limited to that. He had convinced Ada de Marmorne that I ought not to be received at the chalet, on account of the reputation of Mademoiselle Abeille—a suggestion of all but irresistible force in such a country as France, where the good fame of a young unmarried lady is considered lost if a single slanderous tongue has ever ventured to make a remark about her. Too unhappy herself to see with pleasure the possible happiness of others, Ada's state of mind was exactly suited for the reception of such a hint as that. Besides, she was angry at Abeille for not being sufficiently grieved about her father's death; and the suspicion that her sister was taking pleasure in my visits was enough of itself to make her resolve that they should be brought to a termination. There may even have been a little feminine jealousy in the matter; for, though Ada did not love me, she may have been displeased at the idea that I should win the heart of Abeille whilst she herself was grieving for the loss of Julius. Despair can have little sympathy with hope; and sorrow is apt to consider that happiness is not only unnecessary for others, but positively unbecoming.

Whatever may have been Ada's private reasons, or the degree of influence that Emil had exercised upon her mind, she told me, at the moment of my departure, that, under present circumstances, the customs of French society compelled Abeille and herself to live in more complete seclusion. The hint was intelligible, and I took it.

LXXIV.

As I was leaving the chalet, not in a very good humour with things in general, Gustine came after me in a hurried manner, as if very anxious to give me the benefit of her loquacity.

"Can we go back to Marmorne now, sir, do you think? It's fearful living up here in these woods where devils walk at night."

"Nonsense, Gustine: you don't believe in those idle stories, do you?"

"It has been *seen*, sir; and I wonder you dare sleep at Boisvipère. It's bad enough having to sleep in this place; but I wouldn't pass a night at Boisvipère if you would give it me."

"*What* has been seen?"

"Well, some say it's our Monsieur; and some say it's Monsieur Jules: but *I* say it's neither one nor the other."

"That's exactly my opinion. But what do you make it out to be, Gustine?"

She came close to me, and put her lips to my ear. I listened intently, and she whispered, "It's the *Galipote*."

The *Galipote*, I must explain to readers at a distance, is a wandering fiend, entirely believed in by every peasant, man, woman, or child, within forty miles of Marmorne. I have never been able to get a complete description of this dreadful fiend; but the peasantry are awfully afraid of it, and I am rather disposed to imagine

that it may be the satyr of classic times invested with diabolical attributes in the middle ages. This is the more probable that the *Galipote* is generally described as having some physical characteristics of a brutal nature, such as horns and hoofs.

"Very well, Gustine; and if it *is* the *Galipote*, what then? I daresay it will do us no harm."

"You make me go cold, sir, with saying such a thing as that. It's a tempting of Providence. Anyhow, Monsieur Adolphe," she added, in tones not implying so much disapproval, "take this sprig of blessed boxwood: it may keep you safe. I've got enough for both of us, and I don't need it as much as you do; for the *Galipote* goes about Boisvipère more than it does here."

LXXV.

Gustine's alarm about the supernatural visitant brought back my mind from Ada to that singular item in the catalogue of recent events. My own mind had already gone through various phases of opinion on that subject. It had been impressed rather strongly by the *curé's* affirmations; not because I am naturally inclined to be superstitious, but because the *curé* had such a genuine belief in the apparition, that I could not altogether resist the influence of his faith or credulity so long as I remained with him. Emil's answers to my questions had affected me differently. He did not seem willing to answer my questions at all, and the answers which he did give were too laconic to throw much light on the

matter; but either he had seen something remarkable and difficult to explain, or else he was purposely endeavouring to create superstitious apprehensions in my own mind. About Perrin's belief in the apparition, there could be no doubt; but as Perrin was a genuine peasant, there was no reason why I should attach more importance to his impressions than to those of any other Frenchman of his class. Ghost stories abound in the country about Marmorne and Boisvipère, and have abounded, I suppose, ever since the region was first inhabited; but however numerous the old ghost stories may have been, the people still require a new one from time to time, as a cultured community requires new novels. The excitement occasioned by the war, by the presence of danger and death, would naturally give a fresh impulse to the sense of the supernatural, so that people would begin to see ghosts again in lonely places.

This is the way in which I reasoned with myself during my walk from the chalet back to Boisvipère; and still there remained in the bottom of my mind an excited interest in the matter which amounted, certainly, to the sensation of an excited curiosity. I did not believe in the ghost, but could not resist the impression that something unusual had given rise to it; and I resolved to discover, if possible, what that mysterious *something* might amount to.

It was already dark when I reached the chateau, and the first person I met was Joseph Migeon. I wanted to speak to him about the horses, which, since Perrin's

departure, had been entirely left to his care. After making sure that he knew enough of Perrin's ways with the horses to attend to them without disturbing their habits, I told him bluntly that I thought Perrin had been an ass to leave a good place because he fancied he had seen a ghost.

"Well, sir," Migeon answered, "as to that, I think I shouldn't stop long in such a situation as this if I could get another. I'm not very easily frightened at anything belonging to *this* world; but when folk come from *another* world, I do confess that I'm afraid of them."

"They say you have seen it yourself. What did you see?"

We had got to the stable by this time; and Migeon lighted the stable lantern, and began to look after the horses, as if anxious to escape my questioning. I was determined, however, to get as much out of him as I could, and the end of it was that he came close to me, and in a low voice, as if dreading to be overheard, he told me that the ghost appeared every night when the big clock in the chateau struck twelve, and that it glided along the edge of the wood. "You've no need to go out to see it, sir," he added, "for you've only to look out of your own bedroom windows and you'll see it plainly enough if there is light to see anything. I wouldn't go near it if I was you, for harm might come to you. Perrin saw it from his window, and that was quite enough for him."

"My brother did not see it from the window. His rooms don't look out upon the wood, but on the courtyard."

"Perrin saw it first, sir; and then Monsieur your brother walked out at night, round about the chateau, as he wanted to see if there really was anything; and then he saw it, much nearer than Perrin did."

"Well, and what is it like? Whose ghost is it?"

Migeon put his ugly face unpleasantly close to mine, and said, "*It is Monsieur Jules.*"

Sceptical as I was, I started at Migeon's words, but I went into the chateau with the firm conviction that Emil and Migeon had arranged this matter between them to get Perrin out of the way. In this they had perfectly succeeded; and now it was probable that some means would be taken for getting *me* out of the way also—a much more difficult enterprise. Migeon may have imagined that the ghost would be as effectual with me as it had been with Perrin, but surely Emil could not have paid me the poor compliment of believing that.

LXXVI.

"As you have not Perrin to serve you," Emil said, on my return to the chateau, "I suppose you will dine with me."

The invitation was not very cordial; but I accepted it.

Migeon's wife served our very simple meal, so I felt tempted to ask if she knew anything by personal experience about the ghost. She started, and seemed embarrassed. When I asked what time it appeared, she said about eleven at night (her husband had said twelve); and on my inquiry as to the appearance of the ghost,

she crossed herself, and answered that it was all white like an angel. On the whole, Migeon's wife seemed much more anxious to avoid the subject than her husband had been. Meanwhile, Emil appeared annoyed at my questioning her, but said nothing.

Our fraternal evening was not particularly agreeable when we were left alone. Emil drank some wine after dinner in the English fashion, and certainly more than usual. After that he lighted a cigar, and offered me one; but our conversation was dull, and interrupted by long intervals of silence. I tried to make him talk about Ada, but without success; and then the little conversation which passed between us was about the war and the future prospects of France. Emil could carry English reserve and English fraternal coldness to a wonderful degree of perfection when he liked.

Finding nothing to interest me in my brother's society, I went to my own room at ten o'clock, and found a good fire there burning briskly on the old hearth under a high grey marble chimney-piece. Above this was a looking-glass, about three feet high, with many imperfections in its silvering, set in wainscot, painted grey, with carved branches of laurel above it, on which were still some remnants of faded gilding. I stood and looked at myself in the glass, and gradually there came over me a sense of solitude far surpassing, in the completeness of its desolation, anything that I had ever experienced in the whole course of my previous existence. During my father's lifetime, even in our most retired and tranquil life at Segrave, I had always him to think

of, always his companionship, which, though not merry or gay, was soothing and pleasant, because he loved me. Since his death, M. de Marmorne had done more towards replacing him than I had hitherto been aware of, and now he was gone too, lying buried in the pasture near the Roche des Aiglons, with German bullets in his loyal and honourable breast. Ada and Abeille had been like sisters to me, or more; and now, although so near in mere geographical distance, they were removed by Ada's sudden awakening to social *convenances* as effectually as if a kingdom had been placed between us. Emil was called my brother; but he had never been very fraternal at the best, and was now less fraternal than ever. Even Perrin, my servant, to whom I had become really attached for his readiness and goodwill, was now separated from me, at least so long as I remained at Boisvipère, by a cause which, however absurd it might seem to a stronger mind than his, was nevertheless perfectly efficacious; and there I was in this strange, old building, where I lived only on sufferance, absolutely without one single human being to whom I could speak frankly about what interested me most. Under these circumstances, my thoughts turned to Julius with such a longing as I had never felt before. His return, if only he could and might return, would relieve on the instant both my increasing anxiety about him and this intolerable sense of loneliness. It would fill the void in my life, and set other things straight which were now going rapidly in a direction that I instinctively felt to be disastrous.

The fireplace, like most fireplaces in old French houses, was too artlessly constructed to prevent smoking altogether; and the room was now beginning to be filled with a light smoke which, though not so unpleasant as that from coal, was still an undesirable atmosphere to sleep in. The windows were tall, with massive woodwork, small panes, and a heavy iron apparatus, which after some effort allowed of the possibility of opening them. One window looked to the east, the other faced southwards. I opened the eastern window first, and then, finding that there was no wind, did the same with the other, to change the air more rapidly. The night was frosty, with a thin sprinkling of snow upon the ground; the stars were intensely bright in the intervals of scattered clouds; and there was a melancholy waning moon, rising late and pale behind the black belt of forest.

It was now half-past eleven. My reflections on my own loneliness had banished all desire for sleep, and a certain fascination kept my eyes fixed on the impenetrable shade between the flat snow-besprinkled ground and the luminous sky above. Then the idea occurred to me that I would watch for the ghost.

Gradually the influences of the place and the hour wrought upon me, and threw me into a new psychological condition. My reason still obstinately refused to believe in the supernatural; but a new and very awful *sense* of the supernatural crept over me from head to foot, running along my nerves like some mesmeric influence, subtle, indefinable, yet no more to be resisted

than the electricity which pervades the atmosphere when we say that thunder is in the air. It was not fear, but rather a strange longing to perceive the spiritual world. "If Julius is really dead," my soul said to itself, "I wish that some communication might be possible between us."

I had hardly given a mental form to this desire when something became visible on the edge of the wood, under an old stunted oak. It glided a few yards, and then disappeared. I watched and it appeared again, more to the southwards. After that a glint of moonlight fell upon it, and I perceived that the apparition was a tall, white figure, dressed as if in a shroud.

I moved to the other window and saw it still better, passing along the edge of the wood as if making the circuit of the open space on which the chateau of Boisvipère was built. In continuing this circuit, the apparition passed out of my range of vision; for I could not see far to westwards, and not at all to the north.

I watched an hour longer, but saw no more that night. Did I believe it to be a spirit? The true answer to such a question would be a complex one. My reason refused to consent until the matter had been more fully investigated; but I had received a new and peculiar impression, due perhaps, in part, to my excessive and almost painful feeling of loneliness.

However that may have been, I slept soundly, and awoke the next morning with a cool determination to sift the matter to the bottom. I began by telling both Emil and Migeon that I had seen the ghost, and in-

tended to watch for it again; but I did not tell them *how* I intended to watch for it.

My new plan was not to remain in the bedroom, but to watch on the open space about the chateau, so as to be able to get nearer to the apparition, and see what a closer view might reveal to me. Again, I determined to be on horseback, for two reasons—firstly, because the horse would enable me to follow the apparition much more quickly round the edge of the wood; and secondly, because I felt curious to know what the animal itself would make of it. There may possibly also have been an unavowed desire to have the companionship, even of a brute, in an adventure of that nature.

At half-past ten o'clock, I saddled the better of my two horses with my own hands, and quietly led him into a gloomy place under the wall of the terrace. I then mounted him, but remained quiet like a sentinel. The resemblance to a sentinel was indeed very nearly complete, for I was armed with a large revolver, not knowing what might happen.

I had a full view of the belt of forest to the southwards, and partial views to the east and west. The north would be visible at any time in a few seconds, by simply riding to the other side of the chateau. All the open space was good firm ground, without obstacles of any kind, on which my horse, who knew it perfectly, could gallop safely even on a darker night than that.

Perhaps the mere contact with a physical reality, in the shape of a powerful horse, may have disposed me on the second night to resist more energetically the

invasion of *eerie* feelings; at any rate, whatever may have been the cause, I now awaited the ghost without any of those peculiar sensations which had disturbed my nervous system on the first occasion.

I had not very long to wait. To say that a white form appeared would scarcely be an accurate use of language; for that which I saw had hardly any form, but it was about the height of a man, and the whiteness of it was visible enough for me to follow its movements.

The apparition glided as before along the edge of the dark wood. I watched it for a few minutes, and then rode straight towards it, being determined to approach as near as it would let me. My plans were, however, all but frustrated by an unforeseen difficulty. The horse, on coming nearer, suddenly stopped short and would not advance an inch. Then he turned round with a violent, uncontrollable movement which almost unseated me, and rushed wildly in the opposite direction. As soon as I recovered some power of guidance, I directed him towards the edge of the wood at another point, and then skirted it, coming back circuitously to the same place; but the ghost had disappeared. Here I waited patiently, expecting its reappearance, which occured ten minutes later at another place, more to the southwards; and this time the moon shone upon the apparition brightly, making the whiteness of it as visible as a snow-giant, or Lot's wife after the miracle. Being now better prepared for what my horse might do, I made him feel that resistance was out of the question, and rode him slowly towards the object of my pursuit, though he

dreaded it as the inexperienced hunter dreads the African lion. The apparition remained fixed as if it awaited me; but the horse stopped within twenty paces, and would not be induced to go nearer; however, he swerved neither to right nor left, but stood firm, though trembling in every limb.

"Who and what are you?" I asked the ghost in French; and the ghost answered in a sepulchral voice, "I am the soul of thy brother!"

My anger at the impudence of this attempted imposture was so sudden and irresistible, that, without a moment's pause for further parley or reflection, I drew my weapon and fired. The ghost gave a yell of pain, and disappeared in the depths of the forest. I rode quietly back to the stable, and then retired to my own apartment with the tranquil assurance that we should soon know who the ghost was, and all about him.

LXXVII.

The next morning Emil informed me that Joseph Migeon had been severely wounded in the shoulder by a poacher. I expected this piece of information, the only novelty therein being the situation of the wound. However, I pretended to be surprised, and affected a deep interest in the unfortunate patient. If Emil knew who had wounded his servant, he preferred an appearance of ignorance for reasons of his own.

I did not go to see Migeon, but I offered to ride at once to Marmorne for the doctor, which Emil accepted.

There was not usually a resident surgeon in the village of Marmorne; but there was now a military surgeon in the place, who kindly rode to Boisvipère. I could not accompany him, being anxious to see Perrin, whom I found at Les Chaumes with his old mother. It was not a part of my plan to take the old woman into my confidence; but I got Perrin out of the cottage, told him everything about the ghost, and fully convinced him that there was no probability of its reappearance. The result was that he re-entered my service from that hour, and promised to meet me in the evening at Boisvipère, resuming his ordinary duties.

I rode back alone to the chateau and met the military surgeon. "The wound is serious," he said, "and will probably turn out to be even more serious than it appears just at present. It is impossible for me to attend to it at such a distance; so the man must be brought down to Marmorne, and put in the ambulance there with the other surgical cases, and then he will be properly looked after. Your brother seems to have a very strong objection to this; but I have insisted upon it, and shall send men up from Marmorne to fetch the patient."

"This accident is awkward for my brother, as Migeon was his only man-servant."

"Yes, that is what he told me, and he gave me a commission for a man named Jean, who used to be M. de Marmorne's servant, and who will be able to replace this Migeon. One thing puzzles me. The shot is believed to have come from a poacher; and yet it is a

bullet wound, a pistol-shot evidently. Poachers usually fire small-shot; but in this part of the country they seem to be resolute and dangerous fellows, going armed like brigands."

"Yes, they are very dangerous," said I, dryly.

LXXVIII.

When I got back to the chateau, matters entered upon a new phase.

"We cannot do altogether without servants," I remarked to my brother, "so I have induced Perrin to come back again."

Emil looked at me as if in astonishment at my audacity, and then replied with firmness: "I am sorry you did that without consulting me. I will not have him in this house."

"Why?"

"I am under no obligation to give reasons; however, to oblige you, I will add that I do not like his manners."

"You need not come into contact with him unless you like. He was a good servant to me; and I have taken him on again."

"He shall not stay at Boisvipère."

"This is very extraordinary. Do you mean to tell me, Emil, that, whilst you allow me to retain my apartment in the chateau, I am not to be allowed to keep a servant who pleases me, at my own expense?"

"There cannot be two masters in one house. Boisvipère belongs to *me*."

It had come at last. This was my dismissal, expected in one form or another for some time past. The objection to Perrin may have been partly sincere ; it was probable enough that Emil did not like to have him about the place : but it was also evident that my brother had seized upon my re-engagement of Perrin as a convenient pretext for quarrelling with me, and getting me out of the house at the same time. My determination to remain at Boisvipère at all costs, gave way before a natural consideration for my own dignity. It being clear that my presence there was no longer tolerated, nothing remained for me but to go elsewhere.

"You shall not be troubled with me any longer, Emil," I said, with the coldness of an accepted and recognised estrangement: "all I ask is, that Perrin may be admitted into the house to assist in the removal of my things."

"Certainly; I cannot object to that."

Removal? Where was I to go? The chateau at Marmorne was occupied by the military, so was the inn; and it was a peasants' inn at the best, not suited for a man of my habits. The Trois Chênes might have been more to my taste, but it was a blackened ruin ; and the innkeeper, my good friend Jolif, was lying in the valley of the Roche des Aiglons. The chalet was occupied, and was Emil's property ; the *curé's* house was too small for me to intrude upon its inhabitant. As for M. Didier, the mayor, I did not know him intimately enough to offer him the pleasure of my society for several days or weeks. Where was I to go?

My brother, it is probable, would not have been dissatisfied if I had left the country altogether, and returned in disgust to England; but I could not oblige him so far as that, being determined to keep within reach of Ada and Abeille, in the conviction that I was the truest, and especially the most vigilant, friend they had, and this notwithstanding Ada's astonishing treatment of me at our last interview.

I took Perrin into my confidence, told him frankly of the disagreement with my brother, and of my resolve to remain at Boisvipère no longer. He offered a suggestion which proved acceptable for want of a better. There was an empty cottage at the little hamlet of Les Chaumes, a genuine peasant's cottage, built of rough granite and thatched. I could certainly have that, and enter into possession immediately, as the owner lived in the hamlet. The place might be made habitable enough with my furniture, which included some pieces of tapestry that would do to cover the rough walls. Perrin would attend upon me; there was a woman in the hamlet who had been in service, and could cook for me; whilst my horses could be conveniently kept in a stable in the same hamlet.

I slept at Les Chaumes that night in Perrin's own cottage, and the next day we completed the arrangements in the other. I was not lodged very luxuriously, but many a general in war-time has been more badly off. When my things were put in order, that humble *chaumière* had become a residence which a German prince would not have disdained amidst the hardships of that grim winter of conflict.

LXXIX.

During the next three weeks there was not a single event of any importance. I had no communication with Emil, and not a hint of any news about Julius. My anxiety about him increased in the solitude of the little hamlet where I now lived, and became difficult to endure, especially in the silence of the long nights, when I awoke long before the dawn, and lay in my bed tormenting myself with fruitless conjectures. I had no news either concerning the inhabitants of the chalet, who were now separated from me by more than geographical distance. At length this isolation from those I cared for became positively insupportable, and I resolved upon a step which in England would have been the most natural thing possible, but which in France constituted a flagrant violation of all propriety. I determined to write to Abeille, and send the letter by Perrin to Gustine, to be delivered privately. Gustine was a faithful friend and ally of mine, and I knew that she would not fail to do what I required of her. My letter was of the most formal description, beginning with "Mademoiselle," and ending "Votre bien dévoué serviteur;" whilst the few sentences which I ventured to address to the young lady went no further than the expression of a respectful desire to be informed about the health of the two sisters, except that I offered my services if at any time either of the ladies might consider that I could be of any use, and I informed Abeille about my change of residence.

Perrin reached the chalet without being observed, by taking a circuitous path in the woods, and he saw Gustine personally, but no one else. He brought no answer from Abeille, nor had I expected any; but he got some news from Gustine which was not altogether without interest. The news was, that since my departure from Boisvipère, my brother Emil had been at the chalet every day. There was also a very curious piece of intelligence about Migeon's wife, to the effect that since her husband had been taken to Marmorne for surgical treatment she had never once been to see him, but had remained steadfastly in her own dwelling, performing her usual duties as my brother's servant with a constancy which seemed remarkable and almost surprising under the circumstances. Perrin thought she took her husband's situation very coolly. Gustine said that both the ladies seemed well, and that Mademoiselle Ada spoke more than she had been accustomed to do for some time past.

The frequency of Emil's visits to the chalet made it clear to me that he had by no means abandoned his project of marrying Ada; and as I on my part refused to consider the death of Julius a certainty until I had some evidence of it, the idea that Emil might possibly succeed in supplanting him was both painful and odious to me. Would not Julius, wherever he was, still consider me as the guardian of his dearest interests, and if, on his return, he found his place taken and his hopes dashed to the ground, would he not think that I might have done something to prevent, or at least to delay,

such a catastrophe? It was intolerable to think that my retreat to Les Chaumes had left such facilities to Emil—facilities of which he had begun to avail himself during my absence on the quest by which he had first got me out of the way. The affair of the ghost, absurd as it may seem, had succeeded admirably in getting rid of Perrin, and failed at last only because Migeon, encouraged by his first success, had tried the same experiment on me without sufficiently taking into account the difference of nationality and education. It was only when pushed to an extremity that Emil had resolved to quarrel with me directly, but I had now no manner of doubt that Ada's sudden sense of the impropriety of my visits to the chalet was due to some insinuation from my crafty and unscrupulous brother. His own visits had now become quite as frequent as mine had ever been, but he had the excuse of business, and no doubt availed himself of it to the utmost; besides, he was the owner of the property, and consequently *chez lui*. For me to go now and offer advice to Mademoiselle de Marmorne would have been an impertinence of which I did not feel myself to be capable. There are things which a gentleman can do; but there are also things which he cannot do, and one of them is to offer advice to a lady who has made him understand that she does not want it. Under these circumstances, there was literally nothing for me to do but wait until Abeille made some appeal to me, so I remained in seclusion at Les Chaumes, expecting a letter daily.

LXXX.

The letter came at last, and it was Gustine who brought it — letter, indeed, I can hardly call it, but rather a note, a formal little note of four lines beginning with "Monsieur" simply, and ending "Veuillez agréer, monsieur, mes sincères salutations." The body of the communication contained no specific information of any kind, but said that an event had occurred which led the writer to feel the need of my advice, that she wished for a personal interview, and that Gustine, who was in her confidence, would arrange it.

This was not by any means an easy matter. Ada and her sister lived so constantly together that it was hardly possible for Abeille to absent herself during a single hour. The chalet was so small, and the wooden partitions so thin, that an interview indoors was not to be thought of. After a consultation with Gustine, it was decided that the meeting should take place by the stream, just below the weir at the lower end of the lake, the next day at five o'clock in the afternoon.

I was there ten minutes before the appointed time. The place was well selected, being as much screened from observation as the bottom of a deep military trench; for the weir rose to a height of more than thirty feet above the rocky bed of the rivulet, and the precipitous banks were densely wooded, so that we should be quite invisible from above. The water leaped in a noisy cascade over the weir, and our voices would be quite inaudible to any chance passer-by, if any one

happened to pass that way—a most improbable supposition, for the weir at La Creuse was one of the loneliest spots in France.

Abeille came punctually at the appointed time. Our greeting was one of simple politeness, respectful on my part, hesitating and timid on hers. I had no right to presume upon the accidental betrayal of emotion into which we had been led on another occasion; and as Abeille had trusted me so greatly as to overcome all the prejudices of her rank and nation, by asking me to meet her privately, I was determined that no indiscretion on my part should give her the slightest reason to regret it.

"Monsieur," she began formally, "I am sorry to have given you this trouble, but I greatly need your advice. My sister Ada is firmly convinced that your absent brother is dead, so convinced that she has taken a great resolution. She has determined to marry your brother, Monsieur Segrave of Boisvipère."

The news came upon me like a cold blast. I had expected it, but not so soon. I had believed that Emil was working for this result; but I had not believed that he would overcome Ada's affection for Julius, or even her mere apathy, so speedily.

Abeille paused after my first expression of astonishment, and then with a woman's practical sense came to the object of our meeting—"What can we do to prevent it?"

What, indeed? Of course Abeille had already exhausted her resources in argument. She must have

used exactly the same arguments that I myself should have used, and what could I say more? I could only repeat that nothing really proved the death of Julius, and this would have no influence on a woman who had embraced despair like a gloomy religion.

"We may not be able to persuade either my brother or your sister to give up this project, but we may perhaps obtain a delay in the execution of it. Is any date agreed upon for the marriage?"

"Monsieur, your brother is very urgent. It is agreed that the marriage is to take place at the end of January."

I was accustomed to French precipitation in marriages, but this instance took me by surprise. It was the 10th of January already, for time had been slipping away quickly since the combat at the Roche des Aiglons. The difficulty of taking any practical step was much increased by the fact that I had not yet been officially informed about the marriage. I could not say a word about it, either to Emil or to Ada, without revealing the communication between Abeille and myself.

"I can do nothing until the intended marriage is made public. The banns will have to be published twice at the *mairie*, with an interval of a week. That will give ten days clear, as the marriage cannot take place until three days have elapsed after the second publication. Meanwhile you, Mademoiselle, may perhaps be able to influence your sister so as to obtain a delay. I cannot obtrude any advice upon her myself."

We stood in perfect silence for nearly five minutes,

and then the voice of my innermost consciousness said to me in clear words, so audible that it seemed as if I heard them with my ears—"Why concern yourself so much about the happiness of others, to the neglect of your own? Here is a golden opportunity. If you let it slip, when will it occur again?"

"Mademoiselle," I said in obedience to this hint, "I am anxious for the happiness of my brother Julius, but may not I think also of my own? All that your sister could ever be to him, you might be to me, and more."

She was looking down when I spoke, as if intently studying a tiny fern, now golden-red, that grew in a crevice of the rock, but when I had said my say, she turned quickly round, and looked at me with a direct and open glance quite different from her usually timid demeanour.

"I like the loyalty of your character," she said, in a frank, clear voice, "and I trust you." With this she held out her hand.

LXXXI.

I went back to Les Chaumes in a condition of personal happiness, which for the moment made me disposed to think of Julius with less anxiety. Abeille and I had not gone so far as to mention even a possible date for our marriage—indeed the word "marriage" had not been mentioned between us in connection with ourselves, but it was now thoroughly understood that we were to be married ultimately, in calmer and happier times. This was enough, and more than enough, to

make the present endurable, and my humble cottage at Les Chaumes would have become a palace of perfect felicity, if that wearing anxiety about Julius could have been permanently relieved.

I pass over the days which elapsed before the publication of the banns at the *mairie*. I went to Marmorne several times to see if they were put up, but in vain. At length I found them at the door of the village school, which was in the same building. The banns were like any others in appearance, written out in the schoolmaster's clear hand.

It occurred to me that perhaps some delay might be brought about by a difficulty in England, as Emil would have to get through certain formalities in London about which all French authorities are usually most exacting and utterly unreasonable. Full of this idea, I called upon M. Didier, the mayor. The result of this visit was not at all encouraging.

In the first place, for some reason which I could not penetrate, M. Didier was particularly pleased with the marriage. Emil had gained his esteem as a man of sound practical sense, and he felt convinced that Ada, who needed a protector after her father's death, had found exactly the proper sort of husband. M. Didier said he had never had the honour of knowing Monsieur Jules so well, but I could see at a glance that my brother Julius seemed to him a flighty and unsubstantial sort of character in comparison with Emil. Being thus strongly biassed in favour of the marriage, M. Didier was not likely to be captious about papers. To get an

answer out of him on this subject, I remarked that the wedding would probably be delayed, as there was usually a great difficulty in getting all the papers necessary for an international marriage. "This is quite satisfactorily arranged already," was M. Didier's prompt reply. Here was plain evidence that Emil had taken precautions long beforehand, probably even before Ada had been persuaded to accept him. Thoroughly aware of the importance of these formalities, my brother had acted in the matter with the foresight of an experienced lawyer, intimately acquainted with French exigencies and usages.

Nothing now remained but to go boldly and see Ada herself. I had a good excuse in going to offer congratulations on the happy event.

Ada received me at the chalet with a cool dignity that might have disconcerted me in ordinary times. Under present circumstances it gave me courage to speak openly. "I have come," I said, "to express the sincerest wishes for your happiness, and at the same time a regret that my brother Julius should be forgotten in his absence."

"I thank you for your good wishes," Ada answered, looking at me with eyes equally expressive of sadness and of resolution, "and I quite believe them to be sincere." She said not a word about Julius, but I was determined that she should not avoid all mention of his name.

"As the nearest friend Julius Segrave has in the world, I renew the expression of my deep regret that one whom he loved so truly should have forgotten him."

"I have not forgotten him," she answered calmly; "but he is dead, and my father is dead, and the shelter of another affection has been offered me. Can you blame me for accepting it?"

"I express no blame, but simple regret. There is no proof that Julius is dead. Would it not be well to wait for a proof?"

"To suppose him alive would be a criticism on his conduct so severe that I am incapable of making it. Can you imagine him alive and leaving me to suffer the tortures of anxiety through all these weary weeks? Had he been living he would have written to me. You do not imagine that he has settled quietly down in some corner of the earth with the intention of avoiding me?"

This was the tone that Ada's mind had hardened itself to by this time. She had not fallen into imbecility as I had once dreaded, but her mind had become hard and cold. It was plain to me that she did not love Emil; her union with him would be a regular French *mariage de convenance*, and she was entering into it merely to establish herself in another kind of life, and cut herself away from a past too painful to be continually dwelt upon. Once the decision taken, she was little disposed to delay, being eager to get through with it, as an emigrant who has determined to quit his native land for ever is eager for the departure of the ship.

With Ada in this state of mind, all that I could say or do to influence her amounted simply to nothing. Abeille was equally powerless, and we could only see the days slip by without employing them to any useful

purpose. The wedding-day was fixed for the 25th of the month, and the days that separated us from that fatal date were becoming fewer and fewer. There was still time for Julius to return before his place was finally taken; but even I, who had hoped against hope, no longer in my innermost conscience believed him to be alive. I only tried to believe that I believed.

LXXXII.

There are almost invariably two marriage ceremonies in France; the civil, which alone is recognised by the law—and the religious, which is still gone through for the satisfaction of the conscience, though it has no legal efficacy. These ceremonies are both usually performed on the same day, though not always. Ada and Emil were to be married first by Monsieur Didier at the *mairie* of Marmorne, and immediately afterwards by our friend the *curé* in the village church. My brother Emil wrote me a civil letter announcing the marriage, and inviting me to be present at the ecclesiastical ceremony, a compliment usually paid in France to acquaintances with whom you are not on very intimate terms. I wrote a polite reply, offering my congratulations, and accepting the invitation.

Ada and Abeille passed the night before the wedding at Marmorne, not the chateau, which was still full of Garibaldian officers, but at Monsieur Didier's house. As for me, I slept as usual in the little cottage at Les Chaumes, and drove over to Marmorne in the early morning.

It was understood in the village that, in consequence of M. de Marmorne's death, and the lamentable state of things in France, Mademoiselle de Marmorne desired the marriage to be of the simplest possible character, and that there should be no public rejoicing whatever. The village, therefore, presented its usual aspect, except that a little crowd had gathered about the entrance to the *mairie*, and some scattered groups were sauntering near the church.

These two buildings were at a very little distance from each other, on opposite sides of the road, at the northern extremity of the village. The *mairie*, a public building which included the school, was a tall new house, which at first sight might have been taken for the principal inn, or for the residence of some *bourgeois* not unendowed with wealth, but absolutely devoid of taste. It stood back about twenty yards from the road, leaving an open space which served as a small playground for the school children. The church was still farther away from the road, in the midst of a graveyard full of wooden crosses, with the usual childish but affecting decorations. The church itself was a small but massive structure, of the purest Romanesque architecture, extremely simple, yet with fine and bold features, especially its apse. The sides of the tower were covered with slabs of chest nut-wood, arranged like slates, and hoary with age. A low spire of the same material completed the edifice. The presbytery, or priest's house, was divided from the churchyard by a little field. It was a very small, humble-looking building, though, as I knew

by experience, the *curé* could just offer a bed to a friend.

There was a little gate before the presbytery, and a bit of garden between the house and the road. The *curé* himself was standing at the gate as I walked toward the church; so, instead of turning at once into the church, as I had intended, I went to give him a greeting.

"Are you going to the church first, and not to the *mairie?*" he asked, with an air of quite serious interest. "You are aware that the civil marriage takes place first."

"Yes; but I was only invited to the ecclesiastical ceremony. My brother Emil and I are not on very good terms."

"There is a reason why it would be very desirable that you should be present at the *mairie;* and as the ceremony is public, you have a right to be there. I ask you as a personal favour not to absent yourself. My own place just now is in the church, where I ought to be awaiting the arrival of the wedding-party; but I shall go to the *mairie.* I entreat you to come with me."

To this I at once consented, to oblige the *curé.* My own taste would have led me to prefer the silent aisles of the old church.

We went together into the comfortless *mairie,* the interior of which presented the usual bare and chilly appearance of such places in French villages. There had been a fall of snow during the night, and the reflection from the snow-covered ground outside gave a ghastly whiteness to the plaster of the ceiling. The walls

were neither papered nor painted, but decorated with a few announcements connected with public affairs. To counteract the chilly temperature, a fire had been lighted in a small stove, which was red-hot already, and gave a stifling dryness to the atmosphere, in combination with an unpleasant odour. There were a few rush-bottomed chairs and two wooden benches in the middle of the room, and a long table at the end farthest from the door.

When we entered, the only person already present was the schoolmaster, who had put on his Sunday clothes: but the daily habit of wearing a blue blouse had been too strong for him; so, in spite of the importance of the occasion, he had put the blouse over his decent broadcloth. The schoolmaster being at the same time the mayor's secretary, and there being no undermaster, all the children were released from superintendence during the celebration of every marriage; and we were made aware of their immediate vicinity by a buzzing noise, which the master quelled every few minutes by calling for "silence," in a loud authoritative tone. This periodic exertion, in combination with the heat of the stove, and a natural tendency of blood to the head, made the schoolmaster or secretary dangerously red in the face. Notwithstanding the very limited extent of his emoluments, he looked both fat and happy, and congratulated me on my brother's marriage in tones of respectful cordiality. We talked for a few minutes about the weather and the war, with exactly the same effect upon my mind that is produced by small-talk at a funeral.

Then came a rumble of carriages in the distance, the noise grew louder as it came nearer, and the wedding-party arrived.

Ada entered the room with M. Didier the mayor. She was pale and grave, but perfectly self-possessed. She returned my greeting easily, with a quiet dignity, but appeared surprised to see the *curé*. Emil looked still more surprised; and there was evidently something in the *curé's* look, or perhaps even in his presence there, which Emil did not like, for he became visibly uneasy. Monsieur Didier, in his frank, blunt way, remarked that the civil ceremony was rarely honoured by the presence of an ecclesiastic. Meanwhile, the schoolmaster busied himself in laying out papers and registers, and opened a book. The mayor girded himself with the magic tricolour scarf with gold tassels—the signal that a mayor is going to act in his official capacity. He then went behind the table.

Abeille had come in with M. Didier's son, whom the reader may remember as having been present at the picnic in the summer when the De Marmornes and the Didiers all came to the lake at La Creuse—one of the last days of peace and happiness that we enjoyed together. I had seen nothing of him since then, as he had been away at a military school. He now appeared in uniform—a fine, manly-looking young gentleman, wonderfully superior in all outward appearance to his father. A momentary pang of something like a vague jealousy passed through my mind on seeing him near Abeille; but my thoughts were speedily turned in a very different direction.

The mayor being now behind the table, with the official tricolour round his waist, and the pair to be married directly in front of him, he began to read from the code some passages relating to the law of marriage. This done, he was proceeding to the ceremony itself—the brief, binding ceremony—when the *curé* stepped forward and requested to be heard for one minute.

"I have been informed of something quite recently," he said, "that may change the sentiments of one of the parties to this marriage. Mademoiselle de Marmorne has accepted Monsieur Emil Segrave in the belief that her *fiancé*, Monsieur Jules Segrave, is dead. Her sentiments might change if she knew that he was still living. He *is* living."

The effect of this announcement seemed to be in inverse proportion to the actual interest of the parties in the matter. Monsieur Didier was struck dumb with astonishment, and began to tremble and fumble about his book. Madame Didier uttered a loud shriek, as if the death of Julius had been essential to her happiness. Abeille turned pale, and sat down on the nearest chair. Ada only looked surprised that the *curé* should have taken upon himself to interrupt the ceremony; and I do not think that she realised the meaning of his words.

Emil realised it instantaneously. After a momentary inward struggle, the only outward sign of which was a twitching of the muscles of the face, he resumed his usual self-possession, and behaved as coolly as if the scene had been a court of justice, and he only an advocate

"I am glad to hear you have news of my brother, Monsieur le Curé, but this need not interrupt the ceremony. Will you please proceed with it, Monsieur le Maire?"

The mayor, at that moment, could not have gone on if he had been willing. He was much too nervous. His hands shook, and he could not read. Perhaps his too great love of good Burgundy had insidiously undermined his nervous system.

The *curé*, on the other hand, was as self-possessed as Emil, and a match for him. "I demand the postponement of the marriage," he said, in a loud voice. "I demand it as an old friend of the late Monsieur de Marmorne, to give his daughter time for reflection. I know where your brother is, Monsieur Emil!"

At this moment a glance from the *curé* to me intimated that I could be of use; so I went and placed myself between Emil and Ada. At the same time Emil said scornfully, "Who is your informant?"

"Joseph Migeon."

"Ada!" I said, "my sister Ada! Julius is alive, and this marriage would drive him to despair. It has become impossible now."

The hardness melted out of her countenance, and she burst into tears. "Why did he never write to me?"

"Monsieur Emil can explain that," said the *curé*.

"Where is he?" Ada asked; "tell me where he is. Let me go to him!" A sudden feverish activity took possession of her. She went to the door of the room, out into the passage, and so to the outer door where

the carriages were waiting, repeating constantly, "Where is he? where is he? Let me go to him!" The little crowd outside saw her pale face streaming with tears, heard the repeated question, and thought that Ada de Marmorne had gone mad.

She walked with her thin little white shoes in the snow, and I, who followed closely, got her into M. Didier's carriage. Before I had time to think, or to notice any one but Ada, the carriage was in motion, and I was sitting in it by her side.

The *curé* was opposite to us with Abeille. I looked out of the window and saw another carriage following us.

"Where are we going, Monsieur le Curé?"

"To Boisvipère."

LXXXIII.

During the long drive to Boisvipère our whole attention was absorbed by Ada. The *curé* simply told her that my brother Julius had arrived at Boisvipère, and that his arrival had become known that morning. Ada asked what had detained him, but the *curé* evaded this question, and seemed anxious not to go into detail. I presumed that he had reasons for this reticence, and did not urge him to be more communicative, notwithstanding my own anxiety. It was not clear how much the *curé* knew; but it was evident that he knew more than, for the present at least, he was willing to tell.

We got to Boisvipère at last, and Emil led us into the house with a formal French politeness, which he knew

how to assume on due occasion. He took us all into the faded old drawing-room, which had been put into a state of something like comfort for Ada's reception, as a wedding-tour was out of the question in the wretched state of the invaded country. A great log fire was blazing on the hearth, pleasanter to look at than the dreary white earth, black trees, and lead-coloured sky, which were visible through the windows.

It is wonderful how even in the most exciting situations the customs of society give to what are called well-bred people the protection of patience, and at least an external calm. We all felt that the moment was intensely trying to Emil; and there was a sort of tacit understanding amongst us that he was not to be treated like a criminal till Julius gave his evidence. When we stood assembled about the hearth, he spoke a few words which I remember, and shall always remember, without the omission of a syllable.

"Mademoiselle de Marmorne is anxious to see my brother. I will fetch him at once. He was fatigued and unwell when I left him, and it may take him a little time to dress; but I have no doubt that when he knows Mademoiselle de Marmorne is here, he will find strength to join this pleasant company."

"Let me go with you, Emil," I said hastily. "I want to see Julius."

"Stay where you are. You distrust me; yet Julius is as safe with me as with you. Ada de Marmorne is lost to me now whatever happens, and I cared only for her."

The door closed, and he was gone. We waited ten minutes — twenty minutes — and there was no sign of either Emil or Julius. Then we became impatient, and in five minutes more a sudden feeling of alarm took possession of every one in the room.

The first person to express the general feeling was M. Didier the mayor.

"I wish you had insisted and gone with him, Monsieur Adolphe. I am beginning to be alarmed. There might possibly be foul play, or at least a great danger to life. Your brothers have every reason to be intensely jealous of each other, and a duel with swords is not an impossibility. As for pistols, we should have heard them by this time. Let us go and seek for your brothers. You know the house well. Guide us all over it."

"Take me with you. Take me to him," said Ada, passionately.

"You are better where you are, Mademoiselle. You two young ladies stay here with Madame Didier. But the *curé* may be of use if he will join us."

So we started on our search. M. Didier, the *curé*, and I. We explored every nook and corner of the chateau. We visited every one of the dreary, abandoned chambers, even up to the garrets of the four pavilions. There was not a trace of Julius in any one of them.

At length it occurred to me that my horses had been transferred from their stable to another, and that no horses, to my knowledge, had been lodged in the old stable since. Could that have anything to do with it?

M. Didier asked the *curé* to say plainly what Migeon

had told him. "I must distinguish," said the *curé*, "between what he told me in confession and what he told me out of confession. He told me out of confession that Monsieur Jules was at Boisvipère: that was all."

The *curé* evidently knew more than this, but hesitated about making use of his further knowledge. "Very well, Monsieur le Curé," answered M. Didier, "if you won't tell, I know somebody who probably will. Let us go to Migeon's wife."

We found her in her own house in the out-buildings, though her husband at that minute was lying dangerously ill at Marmorne; for the wound had been bad to cure and the patient appeared to be sinking. We found Migeon's wife by her own fireside, sitting in absolute solitude, and peeling potatoes, which she tossed one after another into a great iron pan.

"Mère Migeon," said M. Didier, authoritatively, "you are aware that when I ask a question in the name of the law, you must answer it. Where is Monsieur Jules Segrave? You know where he is, and you must tell me."

The woman had just begun to peel a potato when the question was put to her. She finished peeling it without any sign of hurry, tossed it into the pan after the others, rose deliberately, emptied the peelings from her apron into the fire, and then said, "I have been expecting this question for a long time. The day that I have looked forward to is come at last."

With the same deliberation which had marked her movements hitherto, the woman went to a miniature

altar of the Virgin, such as is found in most of the peasants' cottages, lifted the plaster image, and took a large key from its hollow interior. She then lighted a lantern and said simply, "The gentlemen will please to follow me. Je passe devant pour leur montrer le chemin."

She went straight to the old stable; but there was nothing in it except some old wainscoting that had apparently been put there to be out of the way. She easily removed a part of this without assistance, and disclosed a door which she opened with the key that had been hidden in the statue of the Virgin.

Here M. Didier made a remark which I will repeat. "I am not much of an antiquary," he said, "but I know that these buildings are on the foundations of the old feudal castle of Boisvipère. The present chateau was built only in the sixteenth century. The foundations here are much older; they belong to the middle ages: and it's my belief, gentlemen, that this woman is going to lead us down into the dungeons of the feudal castle."

"Monsieur le maire a raison," said Migeon's wife. "Please mind your heads, gentlemen; the staircase is rather low."

I shuddered and shivered from the crown of my head to the very soles of my feet. Was it possible that Emil had consigned Julius to this living tomb?

Down, down we went, and then came to a narrow passage sloping still farther downwards. At the end of this passage was a door which Migeon's wife opened with a key that she took from her pocket.

LXXXIV.

On a low bed in one corner of the dismal apartment lay a human being, nearer to death than life, weak in the last extremity of weakness. Slowly the head turned over on the pillow as I approached. However altered, it was not altered past recognition; for in it I knew the phantom of my brother Julius.

I knelt down beside the bed, and chafed the thin hands. "Julius," I said, "it is your brother Adolphus. Do you know me?"

The face which had expressed nothing but vague wonder hitherto now began to work violently as if animated by a mighty emotion. The sick man withdrew his hand from mine, and sat up, by a great effort, in his bed. "Adolphus," he said in a weak, low, husky voice, "they have put me into prison here as a spy, a Prussian spy. Tell them I am not a spy, but an English traveller. Get me released, and take me with you to Boisvipère or Marmorne. That is the jailer's wife. Give her some money: she has been kind to me."

I did not yet perceive quite clearly how the detention of Julius had been managed in all its details, but here was a partial explanation. He had been got into the dungeon somehow, and then made to believe that he was in a French prison as a suspected spy. The wretched state of his health might be accounted for partly as a result of his African travels, and partly by wilful neglect or starvation since his confinement.

To preserve his mind from too sudden a shock, we

entered into his theory of the matter. I said that he was no longer suspected of being a spy, and would be allowed to leave prison very shortly. I then took Migeon's wife into the passage, and said in a very decided manner—

"I can see at a glance what has been your share in this abominable business. You have obeyed your husband from dread of him, as your husband has obeyed my brother Emil from self-interest. But you have shown some kindness to the victim. He says so, and I believe him. You are a woman, and have the heart of a woman. This will be considered in your favour."

"I have saved his life, sir. If he is alive now, you owe it to me. My conscience would not permit me to let him die."

I thought that the woman's conscience had permitted a good deal as it was, but prudently said nothing, as I might still require her services.

"The first thing to be done is to get him into your house, and put him in your bed. After that we will remove him to the chateau as soon as we safely can."

We managed this speedily, without any additional help. We wrapped our patient in a blanket, and carried him, unobserved by any one, into Migeon's house. Here he simply believed that he had been removed from a prison into a peasant's cottage for the benefit of his health.

The comparatively cheerful interior of the house did Julius good. He looked at everything with evident signs of interest, and began to talk to me again, but I

was thinking of Ada. Could he bear the interview with her? Could I find a pretext for postponing it? This, for the present, was my strongest desire. I wanted to keep Julius in perfect quietness for a time,—for one or two days, if possible.

M. Didier and I left the *curé* with my brother, and returned together to the chateau. I told Ada that Julius was in the cottage, but weak and ill; that I dreaded the effect of her bridal dress upon him, and begged her not to show herself for the present. Meanwhile, M. Didier said a few words to his wife, and she helped us.

"Come back with us to Marmorne for to-night, my dear," she said to Ada. "Monsieur Jules must not see that white dress of yours. You shall return to Boisvipère to-morrow and see him."

Just at first Ada seemed docile, and yielded; but immediately afterwards an idea got possession of her mind. "He has been wounded in his travels or in the war," she said, "and you dread the effect on me. I must see him—I will see him—I will, I will!"

I gave my word of honour that Julius had no wound, but said that he was very weak, and greatly needed a night's rest; that he did not at all expect to see Ada, whom he believed to be at Marmorne; and that her best kindness to him would be a temporary self-denial.

To this persuasion she yielded, and the two sisters went back with Madame Didier to Marmorne. M. Didier accompanied them, but the *curé* remained with me.

In the excitement of that strange hour we had not sought for Emil; but now we began to wonder where he

had gone. I will anticipate matters a little to satisfy the reader's curiosity on this point.

Emil had rapidly changed his dress, taken what money he had at Boisvipère, and set out on foot through the forest, in the direction of the Prussian lines. After three or four days of great hardship and privation (for the country was like Siberia that winter), he succeeded in reaching them, described himself as an Englishman fond of adventurous travel, and so passed into Germany, far beyond the reach of those *gendarmes* that M. Didier was eager to send in pursuit of him.

I have witnessed many touching scenes in my life, but never one that moved me so much as the meeting between Ada and Julius. She came to Boisvipère, as had been settled, the day after we found him. He was still in Migeon's house, and still strangely ignorant that Emil had wronged him. This ignorance was carefully respected, for the present, on his own account.

Ada entered, not in her bridal dress, but in a simple walking costume. She went straight to the bedside and kissed his forehead. He tried to speak and could not, and then, in his weakness, the tears ran down his cheeks. At last he said—

"You waited, and hoped, and trusted me, and I did not come. St Elizabeth's Day, when was it? Is it long past? Have I been long detained?"

He passed his thin hand over his brow, as if trying to collect his ideas. Then, as if baffled by some insurmountable difficulty, he shook his head, and muttered, "I cannot tell; I could not count the days."

"Darling!" he said, with a look of animation, "you have been true to me all through. God bless you!"

This was like the stroke of a dagger to Ada, who shrank under it in silence. Recovering herself with an effort, she said, "There is much in the past that will require explanation. Let us not think of it now. The present is ours, and the future opens to our hopes."

This self-restraint was more than she could maintain for long. A minute later she was shaking from head to foot, and weeping passionately. Then she sat down in a chair out of his sight, and twisted her hands together, sobbing all the time convulsively.

"It is well," said the *curé* to me in a whisper: "this must needs come. She will be better after it."

The *curé* was right in his prediction. From that hour Ada began to recover her old nature, to lose the seeming hardness and apathy which had obscured it. She spoke to me with a sisterly kindness, to Julius with a tenderness which can be reproduced by no mere repetition of her words, for it dwelt in the tones of her voice, and the mingled love and pity of her eyes. She had brought a Sister of Charity with her from Marmorne, and the two women treated Julius with that care which only women can give. They stayed at the chalet with Abeille; but I stayed in Migeon's cottage, never leaving Julius for an hour. Our care soon had its reward. He gained strength rapidly, and his mental vigour began to return with it. One day he said to me, "Adolphus, old fellow, you are about the only man in this world whom

I trust and believe implicitly. Just be so good as to tell me precisely where I am."

"In the out-buildings at Boisvipère."

"So I began to think. And now tell me if my brother Emil had not a hand in my imprisonment. I have suspected as much. Where is he? Why does he not come and see me?"

I answered these questions as far as my knowledge permitted, and there was now no further reason why Julius should not be transferred to a room in the chateau. He was taken to my own apartments there, which were the most cheerful rooms in the place. I had no fear that Emil would return to disturb us, for it was not his interest to return.

Ada now gave me rather an unpleasant commission. She charged me to reveal to Julius the whole history of what had passed at Marmorne and Boisvipère during his absence and detention. I was also to release Julius from his promise of marriage. The way he took this will be best explained by simply quoting his own words.

"It's my impression, Adolphus, that without exactly going crazy, you understand, poor Mademoiselle Ada really became quite a different person in consequence of all her anxiety and grief. She accepted Emil, as I understand it, in sheer despair, when, after her father's death and my supposed death (which she believed just as much as a reality), she felt quite alone in the world. I think I could write if I tried. Give me a piece of paper."

He took the paper, and wrote upon it in a clear hand,

"Sien suis sans autre désirer."

I remembered the line, and Ada would remember it also. It was a quotation from the "Livre des Cent Ballades." I took it at once to Ada, who put the little scrap of paper into her purse, and then said, as she looked at me with more happiness in her eyes than I had seen there for two years, "He has forgiven me—he is generous enough even for that."

LXXXV.

The rest of my story is soon told, and it is not altogether so happy in its ending as the reader probably expects. Julius recovered quite enough of his health for the practical purposes of life; but his hardships were paid for by a loss of that superfluous energy which impelled him to African travel, so that he settled down into a steady squire at Segrave. He and Ada pass the autumn of every year and part of the winter at Marmorne, where Julius hunts wild boars and exercises a liberal hospitality. He has taken Perrin into his service.

Migeon's wound, I am sorry to say, was so difficult to cure that the doctors thought it necessary to perform an operation; but Migeon would not consent to this, so gangrene set in, and he died. This was a severer punishment for his wrong-doing than I should have desired to inflict. His wife was tried as an accomplice in unlawful imprisonment; but Julius gave evidence in her favour, affirming that she had saved his life by taking

care of him after Migeon was gone. The jury consequently found "extenuating circumstances," and the woman was acquitted.

Madame Didier, with feminine perspicacity, discovered my attachment to Abeille. At first I did not trouble myself in the least about this discovery, not supposing that Madame Didier could do anything whatever to prevent the realisation of my hopes. The result showed that I was mistaken. Her husband informed me, and produced evidence in support of his assertion, that M. de Marmorne had arranged with him a marriage between Abeille and that young Didier who was present at the picnic, and who reappeared at the abortive ceremony at the *mairie* of Marmorne. Abeille then told me that a sense of filial duty compelled her to oppose no obstacle to her father's wishes, and that if she had known them earlier she would never have permitted herself to encourage me. I have thought over these matters since, and have come to the conclusion that Abeille may have fancied herself neglected, because I was too much taken up with the affairs of Julius and Ada to pay her the degree of attention which ladies expect from their lovers. However this may have been, the result is that I am an old bachelor, and likely always to remain one. After the first shock of disappointment, I determined to seek relief in travel. That my wanderings might not be without a purpose, I made up my mind not to rest before I had discovered Emil. Aided by the Prussian police, I found him at last in a particularly dull town in Pomerania, a place so

uninteresting that no tourist ever goes there. He was living under an assumed name, and the people who kept his lodgings informed me, before I saw him, that he was not in good health. I presented myself late in the evening, when he could not escape me, and followed the servant straight into his room.

I spare the reader the details of this interview, but will give its results. My brother Emil had never been a robust man, and his life had always been sedentary. He was consequently quite unfit for any great physical exertion, and unable to bear anything like hardship. His flight on foot and alone from Boisvipère to the Prussian lines, forty miles distant, in the bitter cold of that terrible January, gave a strain to his constitution which it never recovered. He had lost himself in the forest after nightfall, slept there without shelter, and continued his journey next day without food. Before reaching the Prussian lines, he had to wade through a river with the water up to his waist. After joining the Prussians, he was laid up with fever in one of their ambulances, and recovered; but during his convalescence he had not the comforts he had been accustomed to, and the seeds of consumption implanted themselves in his system. The shattered constitution could not resist the malady long. He was aware of this, and wrote a brief explanatory statement, which I now place before the reader.

EMIL SEGRAVE'S STATEMENT.

I have not read the narrative prepared by my brother Adolphus. It will be correct as to the facts which came immediately under his own observation, but he does not know all. I therefore supply some details.

I had known Ada de Marmorne before Julius first saw her. It had always been my intention to marry her if possible. I admired her personally, and knew that she would have a good estate.

Julius thwarted me very unpleasantly. He crossed my path in a manner that made it necessary for me to use all my intelligence against him. After his travels in Africa, I learned that he was returning alone, and that he was to be at Marmorne on the 19th of November. I determined to prevent this at all risks. By a chance favourable to my purpose, he arrived at Boisvipère on the evening of the 18th quite alone, having ridden by himself all the way from Dijon. I told Migeon that he must be confined, but not murdered; for I shrank from committing a murder. Migeon belonged to me body and soul; for he had an intense desire to become a landed proprietor, and I promised to give him a small farm, if Julius were kept well out of the way. My brother ate and drank heartily on his arrival. He told me that he had been detained and imprisoned as a spy. This suggested to me a continuation of his imprisonment. I chloroformed him in his sleep, and we carried him to the old dungeon as the safest place. From that hour Migeon took charge of him, and I did

not inquire too minutely how he managed him, though I may surmise that he would reduce his prisoner to weakness by insufficient food. There was no intention of causing death. My passion for Ada de Marmorne led me to consider my marriage with her as the object of my existence, and I gave little consideration to what might happen after it. So far as I had thought about the matter, I had vague intentions of restoring Julius to freedom at a future time; but it seemed difficult to devise means of doing so without compromising my own safety.

As a small compensation for the wrong I did to Julius, I have made a will by which he will inherit the estate of Boisvipère with the chateau, on paying a certain moderate sum of money to Adolphus. He will not long be kept out of this inheritance, for my strength is failing fast, and I am rapidly approaching the conclusion of a broken and disappointed life. The harm I did was suggested by no enmity, for I never either loved or hated any man. I have loved one woman, to my misfortune.

Translation of Stanzas on pages 129, 130, by Miss H. W. Preston, the translator of "Mirèio."

"A thought is mine and groweth still
To win a mien of sweetest grace,
And deeds to do that shall fulfil
With my renown each earthly place.
I list the God of Love, who says
To do my whole devoir were small,
Since I serve one surpassing all ;—
A lady rare, beyond compare
In all that maketh ladies fair ;
And furthermore he makes me know
I must court danger everywhere,
And she herself would have it so."

"Dance, then, and sing and joust and fight,
Be forward still to dare and do.
Meet in the fray some man of might,
And press him hard and smite him true.
And if he fall, thou hast thy due,
The high rewards to valour given ;
Only rest not, once having striven,
But aye thy conquering course maintain.
Into the breach leap lightly then,
Or thread the mine or scale the wall ;
Go where their prowess leads brave men.
Thy love shall love thee more for all."

THE END.

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